

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF *FAT OLLIE'S BOOK*

A NOVEL OF THE

87TH

PRECINCT

ED McBAIN

"Ed McBain is,
by far, the best
at what he does.
Case closed."

—*People*

VESPERS

VESPER
by
ED MCBAIN

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This is for ANNE EDWARDS AND STEVE CITRON

The city in these pages is imaginary. The people, the place, the plot are
fictitious. Only the police routine is based on established
investigatory technique.

It was his custom to reflect upon worldly problems during
prayers, reciting the litany by rote, the prayers a mumble
to his silent thoughts.

The Priest.

At such times, he thought of himself as The Priest.

The T and the P capitalized. The Priest. As if by distance this way, by referring to himself in the third person as someone not quite himself... ... a character in a novel or perhaps... ... someone outside his own body, someone exalted to be thought of with reverence as solely The Priest. By referring to himself in this manner, by sorting out The Priest's problems as problems of someone other than himself, Father Michael could see you see...

It was he, Father Michael, who could find comfort ... the threats in the rectory... ... this is blackmail, blackmail pounding at the central portal doors... ... the black boy at the church, seeking sanctuary, Hey man, help me, they go after

Blood running down his face. ... gone to ruin, all to ruin

Graffiti on the massive stones of the church, barbarians storming the gates. Almost six weeks since all of that ... twenty-

fourth of May, the day of Ascension all that time, almost six weeks, and he was still on his knees to... I came forth from the Father and have come into the world; now I leave the world to the Father, alleluia!

There was the sweet scent of roses on the evening air.

The roses were his pleasure and his vice, he tended them and tended the Lord's flock.

Something still and silent about tonight. Well, a Thursday itself. Something dusky about the name, Thursday, as soft as sunset.

Thursday.

God is rich in mercy; because of his great love for us... I'll tell everything... The boy's blood dripping on the pavement before the altar.

The vengeful cries echo in inside the church.

Still on his knees.

... by this favor are you saved. Both with and in Christ
raised us up and gave us a place in the heavens.

Beyond the high stone walls of the garden, The Priest could
see sootied upper stories of the buildings across the street,
those, beyond those, the sunset-
streaked springtime sky.

The aroma of the roses was overpowering. As he moved past
set exactly at the center of the garden, a stone bench could
feel a sudden suffusion of love.., for the roses, for the
sunset, for the power of the words that soared silently in
God our Father, make us joyful in the ascension of your Son
Christ, may we follow him into the new creation, for his
our glory and our hope. We ask and noticed all at once that
the wall was open.

Standing wide.

The setting sun striking it so that it cast a long arched shadow
reached almost to the maple itself.

He had thought... Or surely, Martha would have... He moved
the gate, painted a bilious green by a tasteless long-
ago priest, and
yet again recently with red graffiti on the side facing the

The gate was wooden and some four inches thick, stone wall
side of it, an architectural touch that further displeased
meticulous eye.

The narrow golden path of sun on the ground grew narrower
swung the gate closed on its old wrought-
iron hinges.., narrower..,
narrower.., and then was gone entirely.

Alleluia, come let us worship Christ the Lord as he ascended
alleluia to The lock on the gate was thoroughly modern.

He turned the thumb bolt.

There was a solid, satisfying click.

Give glory to the King of kings, sing praise to God, alleluia. He bent, he turned and was walking back toward the rectory, the shadow-shrouded maple, when the knife... He felt only searing pain for the first.

He did not realize until the second slashing blow... He knew then he had been stabbed... Turned... Was starting to turn...

And felt the knife entering again, lower this time, in the back... Oh dear God... And again, and again, and again in the back... Oh Jesus, oh Jesus Christ...

As complete darkness claimed the garden.

Not a day went by without Willis expecting someone to find her. The open house tonight was on the twelfth floor of a building about to go co-op. There were a great many strangers here, and strangers were dangerous. Strangers asked questions. What was Willis? And you, Miss. Hollis? Willis and Hollis, they sold law firm. Or perhaps a dance team. And now, ladies and gentlemen, returning from their recently completed tour of the glitzy cities of Europe. we bring you... Willis... and Hollis!

The questions about himself were merely annoying; he wondered if everyone in America had to know immediately what everyone in America did. He was sometimes tempted to say he sold crack to schoolchildren. He wondered what sort of response that would get them you're a cop, they looked at you with raised eyebrows. Cut the crap and tell us what you really do. Really, I swear you're a cop, Detective/

Third Grade Harold O. Willis, that's me; I swear. Looking you over. Thinking you're too short to be a cop, too small, and ugly besides with your curly black hair and wet nose. Let me see your badge. Show them the potshot. My, my, I never met a live police detective before, do you work in one of those precincts we're always reading about, are you carrying a gun? Have you ever killed anyone? The questions. Annoying, but not dangerous.

The questions they asked Marilyn were dangerous.

Because there was so much to hide.

Oh, not the fact that they were living together, this

was already the Nineties, man, nobody even thought about anymore. You got married by choice, and if you chose not simply lived together. Had children together, if you could you wanted, this was the Nineties. And perhaps.., in such acceptance.., you could even.., well, perhaps.., but it was unlikely. Well, who the hell knew? Maybe they could, after right out and say, Look, people, Marilyn used to be a hooker.

The raised eyebrows again.

Oh, really? Cut the crap and tell us what she really did.

No, really, that's what she really did, I swear to God, she was a hooker. She did it for a year or so in Houston, and ended up in Mexican prison on a dope charge, and then picked up the trail in Buenos Aires where she worked the streets for five years, Really. That's what she used to do.

But who would believe it?

Because, you know, you looked at Marilyn, you

saw this woman who'd be only twenty-six in August, slender and tall, with long blonde hair and cornflower blue eyes and a complexion flawlessly pale as a dipper of milk, and you thought No, You didn't survive being a hooker. You didn't come off selling peddling tail --. not to mention the time in that Mexican prison look like this. You just didn't. Unless you were Marilyn. Marilyn was a survivor.

She was also a murderess.

That was the thing of it.

You opened the hooker can of peas, and everything else came out.

The cocktail party was in a twelfth-

floor corner apartment, what the real estate lady kept calling the penthouse apartment, and didn't think it looked luxurious enough to warrant such a

He had been in court all day long and had come up here for a better judgment, at the invitation of Bob O'Brien who said good booze and plenty to eat and besides neither of them risk of getting shot, a distinct possibility if ever you dealt with a hard-luck cop like O'Brien.

He'd called Marilyn to tell her that O'Brien's girlfriend who turned out to be as ditsy as her name would be coming along the four of them could go out to dinner later, and Marilyn sure, why not? So here they were with the sun just gone, the real estate lady pitching renovated apartments to suppose prospects like O'Brien who, Willis discovered for the first time tonight, planned to marry Maizie in the not-too-distant future, lots of luck, pal.

It was Maizie who looked like a hooker.

She wasn't. She worked as a clerk in the D.A.'s office.

But she was wearing a fuzzy pink sweater slashed in a V over endangered breasts, and a tight shiny black skirt that looked like a thin coating of crude oil, and high-heeled, ankle-strapped black patent leather pumps, a hooker altogether, except that she had a girl's voice and she kept talking about having gone to high school Mother Mary Magdalene or some such in Calm's Point.

The real estate lady was telling Willis that the penthouse the one they were standing in this very moment, was going for three-fifty negotiable, at a fixed eight-and-a-quarter percent mortgage with no points and no closing fees. Willis wondered if he had told her that he was presently living in a town house uptown for Marilyn seven hundred and fifty thousand-dollars. He wondered if there'd been any former hookers living in this fine renovated building.

In her high, piping voice, Maizie was telling someone that

Sister Letitia used to hit her on her hands with a ruler.

O'Brien was looking as if he expected to get shot at any
wondered out loud how such a reasonable mortgage rate could
in this day and age.

The real estate lady told her that the sponsor was a bank
which meant nothing at all to Willis. Then she said, "What
Mrs. Willis?"

"It's Hollis," Marilyn said.

"I thought..." She turned to Willis. "Didn't you say your
Willis?"

"Yes, but mine is Hollis," Marilyn said. "We're not married."

"Oh."

"The names are similar, though," Willis explained helpfully.

"And are you in police work, too, Miss. Hollis?"

"No, I'm a student," Marilyn said.

Which was the truth.

"My education was interrupted," she said.

And did not amplify.

"What are you studying?"

All smiles, all solicitous interest; these were potential

"Well, eventually, I want to be a social worker," Marilyn
right now, I'm just going for my

bachelor's."

All true.

"I wanted to be a doctor," the real estate lady said, to
Willis. "But I got married instead," she added, as if blaming

her misfortune.

Willis smiled apologetically. Then he turned to O'Brien and said, "You plan on staying a while longer, maybe me and Marilyn can stay along, okay?"

O'Brien seemed to be enjoying the warm white wine and cold beer.

"See you tomorrow," he said.

"Nice to meet you," Maizie said to Marilyn.

The church garden was crowded now with two ambulance attendants, two technicians from the Mobile Crime Unit, an assistant medical examiner, two detectives from Homicide, a woman from the Photo Unit, and a uniformed Deputy Inspector from Headquarters. The D.I. was the police department in this city was largely Irish-Catholic, and the victim was a priest.

Detective Stephen Louis Carella looked out at the assembled law enforcement officers, and tried to remember the last time he had been inside a church.

His sister's wedding, wasn't it? He was inside a church once, to pray. Well, not even technically inside a church, although he was connected to the church via a wood-paneled corridor that led into the sacristy and then the old stone building itself.

He looked through the open rectory doorway and out into the garden where roses bloomed in medieval splendor. Such a night. On the floor, the priest lay as if dressed in mourning, wearing his trade, festooned now with multiple stab and slash wounds. The roses banked against the old stone walls. A crease creased Carella's forehead. To end this way, he thought. Such a night. He kept looking out into the garden where the suits and blues fussed and fluttered about the corpse.

Carella gave the impression even standing motionless with his pockets of a trained athlete, someone whose tall, sleek frame responded gracefully and effortlessly to whatever demands were made of it. His appearance was a lie. Everybody forgot that middle-aged man really was thirty-something. Ask a man in his mid-to-

late thirties if he was middle-aged, and he'd say Don't be ridiculous. But then take your ten-year-old son out back to the garage and try to play one-on-one basketball with him. There was a look of pain on Carella perhaps because he had a splitting headache, or perhaps he always reacted in something close to pain when he saw the of brutal violence. The pain seemed to draw his dark, slanting eyes further downward, giving them a squinched, exaggerated, O.K. Turn a group photograph upside down, and you could always find Carella by the slanting eyes -- the exact opposite of almost anyone else in the picture.

"Steve?"

He turned from the open doorway.

Cotton Hawes was leading the housekeeper back in.

Her name was Martha Hennessy, and she'd become ill not five years ago. That is to say, she'd thrown up. Carella had asked one of the crew to take her outside, see what he could do for her. Since then, now, the smell of her vomit still lingering in the rectory, the supremacy over the aroma of roses wafting in from outside, the coloration all right now. A bit pale, but Carella realized this was a woman's coloration. Bright red hair, white skin, the kind of woman who turns lobster red in the sun. Green eyes. County Roscommon. Fifty-five years old or thereabouts, wearing a simple blue dress and sensible low-heeled shoes.

She'd told them earlier that she'd found Father Michael in the car; she'd come out to fetch him for dinner. That was at a little past seven tonight, fifteen minutes before she'd starting throwing up. Seven-forty; the police had been here for ten minutes.

"I sent one of the blues out for coffee," Hawes said. "Mrs. Hennessy said she might like some coffee." "Actually," she said, "I'd like some coffee, Hawes if I could make some coffee. We've got a perfectly good coffee machine."

"Yes, but..." "Yes," Carella said, almost simultaneously, technicians will be working in there." "That's what Mr. H. But I don't see why I can't make my own coffee. I don't s to send out for coffee."

Hawes looked at her.

He had explained to her, twice, that this entire place was scene. That the killer might have been anywhere inside the rectory before the murder. That the killer might even have priest's small office, where one of the file cabinet drawers and papers presumably removed from that drawer were strewn floor. Now the woman was questioning, for the third time, not use the priest's kitchen. where, among other utensils great many knives. He knew he had adequately explained why use the kitchen or anything in the kitchen. So how had he communicate?

He stood in red-headed perplexity, a six-foot-two-inch, hundred-andninety-pound, solidly built man who dwarfed the Hennessy woman, searching for something to say that would clarify not want her using the kitchen.

There was an unruly white streak of hair over his left temple, a souvenir from a slashing years ago while he was investigating burglary. It gave his haircut a somewhat fearsome Bride of Frankenstein look, which, when coupled with the consternation on his face, made it appear as if he might throttle the little housekeeper within several seconds, a premise entirely distant from the truth. On the other side, the two red-headed men stood, one huge and seemingly menacing, the other tiny and possibly confused, a blazing torch and a g

Carella looked at both of them, not knowing Hawes had already explained the sanctity of the kitchen to her • twice not knowing why he was looking at her so peculiarly, and beginning to feel a bit of apprehension, not understanding what the hell was going on. Outside in the courtyard the priest lay on blood-stained stones, his blood still seeping from the deep, the deep, the tattered wounds in his back. It was such a lovely night.

Getting away from the matter of the goddamn kitchen, Hawes did you last see Father Birney alive?"

"Father Michael," she said.

"Well, his name is Michael Birney, isn't it?" Hawes said.

"Yes," Mrs. Hennessy said, "but you can have a priest name take Father O'Neill as used to be the pastor here. His name was O'Neill, but everybody called him Father O'Neill. Whereas Michael's name is Michael Birney, but everyone calls him Michael. That's the mystery of it."

"Yes, that's the great mystery of it," Hawes agreed.

"When did you last see him alive?" Carella asked gently. "Michael, that is." Slow and easy, he told himself. If she was a stupid woman, getting angry isn't going to help either her or the situation. If she's just scared, then hold her hand. Then walk outside in the garden.

"When you last saw him alive," he prompted.

"The time. What time was it?" "A bit past seven," she said. "I went to fetch him for dinner." "Yes," Carella said, "but he was dead by then, isn't that what you said?"

"Yes, God ha'mercy," she said, and hastily made the sign of the cross.

"When did you last see him alive ? Before that."

"When Krissie was leaving," she said.

"Krissie?"

"Yes."

"Who's Krissie?"

"His secretary."

"And she left at what time?"

"Five. She leaves at five."

"And she left at five tonight?"

"Yes."

"And that's the last time you saw Father Michael alive?"

"Yes, when Krissie was leaving. He was saying good night

"Where was this, Mrs. Hennessy?"

"In his study. I went in to clear the tea things.., he ta
afternoon, after he says his three o'clock prayers. Kriss
going out the door, he was sayin' I'll see you in the mor

"Krissie who?" Hawes asked.

"Krissie who's his secretary," Mrs. Hennessy said.

"Yes, but what's her full name?"

"Krisfin."

"And her last name?"

"Lund. Krisfin Lund."

"Does she work here full time?"

"No, only Tuesdays and Thursdays. Twice a week."

"And you? How often do... ?"

"Who gets the coffee?" a uniformed cop asked.

"Here's your coffee, Mrs. Hennessy," Hawes said, and took
container from him.

"Thank you," she said, and then, quite suddenly, "It was
done it."

The only problem was that Willis loved her to death.

It bothered him day and night that he loved a woman who'o

someone. A pimp, yes a fucking miserable pimp, as a matter of fact, but as a human being, nonetheless, if any pimp could be considered a decent person, it was never meta pimp he'd liked, but for that matter, he'd never loved anyone with a heart of gold, either. Marilyn was no longer a hooker when she met her, so she didn't count.

She had been a hooker, however, when she'd killed Alberto, the Buenos Aires pimp who by then had been living off the profits of prostitution for almost fifty years. In addition to Marilyn, he had had been six other whores in his stable. He was hated by each of them, but by none so fiercely as Marilyn herself, whom he had subjected first to an abortion and next to a hysterectomy, and finally to one and the same back-alley butcher.

So here was Willis a police officer sworn to protect and enforce the laws of the city, state, and nation in love with a former prostitute, a confessed murderess, and an admitted thief, not necessarily in that order. Only two other people in this entire city knew that she had been a prostitute: Lieutenant Peter Byrne and Steve Carella. Willis knew that the secret was safe with them. But neither of them knew that she was also a killer and a thief. He alone had heard that little confession, he alone was the only one who knew she'd... "I did. I killed him."

"I don't want to hear it. Please. I don't want to hear it."

"I thought you wanted the truth."

"I'm a cop. If you killed a man..."

"I didn't kill a man, I killed a monster! He ripped out my ovaries. I can't have babies, do you understand that? He stole my life."

"Please, please, please, Marilyn..."

"I'd kill him again. In a minute."

She'd used cyanide. Hardly the act of someone with a heart of gold. Cyanide. For rats.

And then... "I went into his bedroom and searched for the combination to the safe because that was where my passport had to be. I found the combination. I opened the safe. My passport was in it. And"

million dollars in Argentine money."

On the night she'd confessed all this to Willis, a night so very long ago, she'd asked,

"So what now? Do you turn me in?"

He had not known what to say.

He was a cop.

He loved her.

"Do they know you killed him?" he'd asked.

"Who? The Argentine cops? Why would even give a damn about But, yes, the only one who split from the stable, yes, an open, and a lot of bread was gone, so yes, they probably the perpetrator, is that the word you use?"

"Is there a warrant out for your arrest?"

"I don't know."

And there had been a silence.

"So what are you going to do?" she'd asked, "Phone Argent if there's a on Mary Ann Hollis, a person I don't even an Hal? For Christ's sake, I love you, want to live with you love you, Jesus, love you, what are you going to do ?"

don't know," he'd said.

He was still a cop.

And he still loved her.

But every time that telephone rang, he broke out in a cold it would not be some police inspector in Buenos Aires, te had traced a murder to the city here and were planning to woman named Marilyn Hollis.

It was easy to forget your fears on a night like tonight forget that some problems might never go away.

At a little past ten o'clock, the city was ablaze with life. Willis knew, this could have been springtime in Paris: he was there. But it felt like Paris, and it most certainly felt like the balmiest spring he could ever remember. As he and Marilyn, owner of the restaurant, a soft, fragrant breeze wafted in off the water. Both of them smiled. He hailed a passing taxi and told the driver to take the park road uptown. They were still smiling.

The windows were down. They held hands like teenagers.

Harborside Lane, where Marilyn owned the town house, was in the confines of the 87th Precinct, not quite as desirable as the Upper East Oval, but a very good neighborhood anyway -

at least when one considered the rest of the precinct territory. Number 1211 was in a row of brownstones adorned with subtle spray-painted scribbles. A wrought-iron gate to the right of the building guarded the entrance to the driveway that led to a garage set some fifty feet back from the park road. The gate was padlocked.

There were wrought-iron grilles on the ground-floor and first-floor windows, and razor wire on the roof overhanging the third floor. There were now two names in the directory set beside the bell knocker: Hollis and H. Willis.

Willis paid the driver and tipped him extravagantly; it was late at night. Marilyn was unlocking the front door as the taxi pulled up to the curb. It turned the corner and vanished from sight, the engine fading, fading, and then disappearing entirely. For a moment, from the street, the small park across the way, were utterly still. He took a deep breath and looked up at the sky. Stars blinked. It was a Pinocchio night. He expected

Jiminy Cricket to come hopping up the sidewalk.

"Hal?"

He turned.

"Aren't you coming in?"

"It's so beautiful," he said.

He would later remember that these were the last words he heard before the telephone rang. The last words before the terror started.

He went into the house and closed and locked the door behind him. The entry foyer and the living room beyond were paneled in mahogany. Thick wooden beams crossed the ceiling. Marilyn began undressing in her blouse as she climbed the

walnut-banistered staircase to the second story.

Willis was crossing the living room, yanking down his tie and unbuttoning the top button of his shirt, when the telephone rang.

He looked automatically at his watch, walked to the phone on the dropleaf desk, and picked up the receiver.

"Hello?" he said.

There was a slight hesitation.

Then a man's voice said, "Perd6neme, seor."

And then there was an empty click.

The altar was naked.

The altar was a twenty-seven-year-old woman who lay on her back on an elevated platform shaped as a trapezoid and covered with black silk. Her head was at the narrow end of the trapezoid, her long hair cushioned on a pillow covered with black silk. White against white. She lay with her legs widespread and dangling over the wide end of the platform, her arms at her sides, her eyes closed.

Lying between her naked breasts was a thick silver disc covered with a silver chain, sculpted in relief with the Sacred Sign of the Black Goat, whose image hung on the wall behind her as well as her ears, face and beard contained within the center and five points of an inverted pentagram:

Smoke from the torches illuminating this symbol swirled under the arched ceiling of the abandoned church. Smoke from the candles

in the hands of the woman who was altar drifted up toward beams that Ion ago had crossed over an altar made not of marble.

The mass had started at the stroke of midnight.

Now, at a little past one A.M., the priest between the sp the altar, facing celebrants, his back to the woman. He w black cotton robe embroidered in richer black with pine o formed a phallic pattern. robe was slit to the waist on e revealing priest's muscular legs and thighs.

The celebrants were here to mark the day of Expulsion. So minutes earlier, during Canon segment, they had each and partaken of the contents of a silver chalice offered the chalice had tonight contained not k red wine symbolic of Christ, but something called Ecstasy, a hallucinogenic dr potent mix of mescaline and speed, A capsule of Ecstasy s dollars. There were at least two hundred people here toni them young, and each and every one of them had swallowed immediately after the conclusion of the third segment of

Kissing the altar/

woman full on her genitals, the priest had recited the timeless words, "Stan is Lord of the Temple, Lord of the bringeth to me joyous youth, all praise Satan, all hail S celebrants had responded "All hail Satan!" and the girl a to the altar and raised her garments to the priest, reveal naked beneath them. The boy acolyte had held a silver con her urine, and the priest had dipped a phallus-shaped aspergill into the container arid sprinkled the celebrants with the little g thou hast thirst, then let thee come to the Lord Satan. I partake of the water of life, the Infernal Lord doth offer he had passed among them with the chalice containing the capsules, and they had washed the caps down with thick re by the deacon and one of the sub-deacons, sixty-one people times twenty bucks a pop came to twelve hundred and change, The girl a the right of the altar now.

She was a darling little blonde girl, all of eight

years old, whose mother was tonight serving as. the altar

dressed entirely in black, as was her father who was sitting
other stoned celebrants and feeling enormously proud of the
important roles his wife and daughter were playing in tonight's
The boy acolyte was only seven. He was standing to the left of the
altar/ woman, staring a bit wide-eyed at the tufted blonde patch above
the joining of her legs. The priest was about to embark upon the
and final segment of the mass, called the Repudiation, especially
tonight in that this twenty-fourth day of May was what the Christians had
named the Ascension, upon which day the body of Jesus was
have risen to Heaven, but here within these walls was being
as expulsion of Jesus from Hell.

The priest had been supplied with a consecrated host at a church
part of the city, stolen this morning at mass by a woman who had
first been coated with alum to protect the wafer from her own sweat.
He held the wafer between the thumb and forefinger of his right hand
deep, mocking bow over it, said, "I show you the body of the
Forgotten One, pretender to the throne of monarch to slave
of minions to perdition."

He turned to face the altar/
woman, his back to the celebrants now, his right
hand raised in the sign of the cross, his left hand holding the wafer
goat symbol on the wall.

"All hail Satan!" he said.

"Hail, Satan!" the celebrants responded.

"All praise these splendid breasts that gave suck to the
he said mockingly, and touched the wafer first to the woman's
nipple and then to her left nipple. Kneeling between her legs
the hand with the wafer on her mons veneris, and said, again
"Blessed be the generous womb that begat the body of Jesus
the host over the lips of her vagina.

Now began the Repudiation in earnest.

Lifting the hems of his robe, fastening them into the belt
at his waist, he wet the fingers of his right hand and touched
to the head of his now-
erect penis. "Jesus Christ, messenger of doom, I

offer you to worm and maggot..." he said, touching the wa-
moistened head of his penis where it clung in desecration
to the widespread legs of the altar, the boy acolyte watc-
and amazed, "thrust you down with scorpion and snake..."
altar where she waited open and spread for him, "show you
savage strife, curse you with famine and filth, bum you i-
cause you everlasting death to the end of time unending,
With the enduring fury of our Lord, Satan!"

"Hail, Satan!" the celebrants chanted. "All hail Hurling
altar, thrusting himselfi! into the woman, wafer and peni-
the priest said, "I descend anew, and ascend forever, sai-
Lord. My flesh is your flesh..."

"My flesh is thy flesh," the woman murmured.

"My flesh is our flesh..."

"Thy flesh is our flesh," the celebrants intoned.

"In flesh, let us find the glory of Satan!"

"In flesh, find the glory of Satan!"

"In lust, let us know the goodness of Satan!"

"In lust, know the goodness of Satan!"

"In flesh and in lust, let us all praise Satan!"

"In flesh and in lust, we praise Satan's name!"

"Blessed be Satan!"

"Blessed be Satan!"

"All hail Satan!"

"Hail, Satan!"

This was four blocks away from where the polic had chalke-
Michael's outline onto the blood-
stained stones in the small church
garden.

The two men were speaking entirely in Spanish.

One of them was exceedingly handsome. Tall and slender, with hair combed straight back from a pronounced widow's peak, he looked like Rudolph Valentino. He did not know who Rudolph Valentino was, so he wasn't flattered when people told him he looked like Valentino.

But he guessed that Rudolph Valentino had to be some handsome man because if there was one thing Ramon Castaneda knew for certain, it was that he himself was handsome as sin.

The man sitting with him was named Carlos Ortega and he was exceptionally ugly. He had crooked teeth and a nose that had been broken often in street fights hither and yon, and a scar that ran down his right eyebrow and partially closed his right eye, and more bald than hair, bald and hulking and resembled an escaped inmate from a mental hospital criminally insane, which he was not. But such was the vanity of men, he, too, thought he was handsome. In fact, many women had told him so. Handsome. He believed them, even if all of them were hooked.

On this twenty-fifth day of May, another spring morning, the two men sat in a coffee shop close to their hotel, discussing why they were in the city. It was still early in the morning, a little seven; the streets were full of people catching breakfasts before going to work. Ramon was in no hurry. The handsome one, Ramon, had steak and eggs; Carlos, the ugly who only thought he was handsome, had pastrami and sausage. They sat sipping their coffee, waiting for the food to come. Ramon idly.

Ramon said in Spanish that he thought it was a pity a man had no telephone last night. A man might complicate matters.

Carlos said in Spanish that he could break fucking bone in any man's body, whoever he was. What difference did it make if she was with a man, a woman, or a chihuahua?

"If she's the right woman," Ramon said.

"Well, yes, we have to make sure she's the right woman," Carlos said.

"Which won't be easy without a photograph."

"But we have her description from the whore."

The German whore was a buxom blonde claimed she'd been op in Munich.

name was Constantia. While they waited for their food, th discussed whether or not she was reliable. Ramon mentione been a drug addict for many years. Carlos said he knew ma were drug addicts who nonetheless made very reliable withr sidetracked wondering if she was a good lay. When their f fell silent for a while, Ramon eating with the exquisite of a man who knew he was devastatingly handsome, Carlos e brute who believed that handsome men like himself could e way they wanted to.

"You think she could be so stupid?" Ramon asked.

"How do you mean?"

"To put her name in the book?" "It says only M. Hollis,"
"Also, there are twenty-eight Hollises in the book."

"But only one M. Hollis."

"True. How's the steak?"

"Ours are better."

He was referring to Argentine beef; a bit of national pride. Carlos noticed that he was enjoying it. The pancakes he h ordered were only so-so. He wondered why he'd ordered pancakes, anyway; he didn't even like pancakes.

"So what we have to do," Ramon said, "is go up there and
: "She could have changed what she looks like, you Carlos

"Yes, women can do that," Ramon said wearily, an observat man familiar with strange and wonderful ways of women cou boredom.

"She could be a redhead by now," Carlos said "Or a brunet

the blonde. The could be history by now."

"We can always look under her skirt," said, and smiled co

"She could have changed it there, too. Or shaw it like a
could be an entirely woman by now." "The blue eyes, she o
Ramon said.

"She can wear contacts to make them green brown or purple
change about herself. We could go up there, it could be s
we wouldn't recognize her."

"So what are you saying?" Ramon asked. shouldn't go up th

"We should go, we should go. But we shouldn't! be disappoint
at her, and she doesn't the German whore's description. W
have been lying, anyway."

"Why would she have lied?"

"For the money. We gave her money."

"With the promise of more."

"If we locate the Hollis woman. If that's even name."

"The German whore says that was her Mary Ann Hollis."

"So then why is there only an. 'M' in the phone book?"

"Because if a woman puts an. 'M.A.' in the phone book, a
knows it's a woman," Ramon said.

"So if you put J. F. Kennedy in the phone book, it means
correct?" Carlos said.

"Well, I don't know why she put only an. 'M' in the phone
admitted. "Maybe in this

country it's cheaper than using two initials ."

Carlos looked at him.

"Why do you think she put only an. 'M'?" Ramon asked.

"Because, one, it could be the wrong woman... "Well, of c

"Or, two, it could be that the man who answered the phone
who's listed in the book, it's a Mr. M. Hollis..."

"No, it's only women who use initials," Ramon said.

"Or, three, she could have changed her name," Carlos said

"That's true. But then why use an. "M'? Why not change it

"Even with an. "M,' it could be changed :Completely," Car
Mary Ann, she yould have changed it completely to Magdale
Malta or..."

He was an Argentine, and so all these names were , natura

"... Matilda or Maurita or Mirabella or or Modesta or..."
the point," Ramon said.

"What I'm saying," Carlos said, "is we uptown, we find a
haired
red-

head with big and a fat ass and brown eyes and her name i
and we think we have the wrong but instead it's really Ma
who upon a time was tall and thin and had blue eyes strai
hair, is what I'm saying."

"So we have to be careful, is what you're saying."

"No, I'm saying we may have to beat the shit of her," Car

"Well, of course," Ramon said, as if it without saying th
had to have the beat out of them every now and then.

"If she tells us she's not who we think she is.

Carlos said.

"Yes," Ramon said.

"To find out who she really is, is what saying," Carlos s

"I agree with you entirely."

"So when do you want to go'?" "Let me finish my steak," F

"You eat more slowly than any person I know."

"Because I was born rich," Ramon said. "Only poor eat quick someone will snatch food away before they're finished ."

"You were born rich, ha!" Carlos said.

"Yes, I was born rich, ha!" Ramon mimicked.

"What I want to do," Carlos said, "I want to be waiting w out of the building. We take it slow and easy. Follow her goes, what she does. We make our move when we're ready to not near a house where a man answers the phone." He looked remaining bit of steak on Ramon's plate. "Now hurry up and man," he said. "Because you'll be even richer once she gives money."

"Sin duda," Ramon said.

Kristin Lund looked exactly like her name. Blonde hair and full tempestuous mouth, and a figure that reminded Hawes sloping hills of Sweden, where he'd never been. Kristin sounded closer to home and just as beautiful. Krissie Lund off the tongue like a balalaika riff. On this fine spring was wearing a pastel blue skirt, high-heeled pumps of the same subtle shade, and lemon-colored pantyhose that matched her lemon-colored sweater. Krissie.

She looked very much like spring. She smelled a lot like Hawes was not mistaken, she was wearing Poison.

She was not surprised to find two detectives on her door the morning; she had heard about Father Michael's murder the night, on on. In fact, she had called 911 at once, to ask in touch with whoever would be investigating the case. The phone said, "What is the emergency, Miss. When Krissie there was no emergency, woman asked, "Do you wish to report

Krissie told her No, she didn't wish to report a but she man whose murder she'd heard reported on television and s who'd be handling the case so she could them. The woman o said, moment, please, I'll give you my supervisor." super and immediately said, " understand you witnessed a murder up, even if she was not a native of city.

"But I did try to contact you," she said, and so dazzlingly that Hawes almost swooned.

"When was this?" Carella asked.

"When?"

"When you tried to contact us."

"Oh. Right after the Eleven O'Clock News. I going to call but I called 911 And then, after I spoke to that supervisor to do. So I went to sleep. I figured get to me sooner or Hawes said.

"So here you are," she said, and smiled again.

"Miss. Lund," Carella said, "Father housekeeper..."

"Yes, Martha Hennessy."

"Yes, told us that the last time she saw him alive was wh saying good night to you."

"That's the last time I saw him, too."

"At about five o'clock yesterday."

"Yes."

"Where did you go after that?"

"I came straight here."

They were in the kitchen of her small apartment on the fo building downtown in The Quarter, far from the precinct t Coffee was brewing in a pot plugged into an outlet above

counter. Krissie leaned against the counter, her arms folded for the coffee to perk. She had set out three cups and a coffee pot. The detectives stood by the open window.

A mild breeze fluttered the sheer white curtains on the wall, danced on the counter top, setting the bone white cups and saucers aglitter.

Krissie lifted the pot and poured the three cups full.

She carried them one at a time to a small round table near the door. The table was already set with teaspoons, paper napkins, a small bowl containing pink packets of a sugar substitute.

"Did you see anyone suspicious-looking outside the church?" Carella asked. "When you left last night?" "Well, what do you mean by suspicious-looking? mean... I guess you know that's a pretty rotten neighborhood, mean, no offense, I know you guys do a good job. But to me, the church there looks suspicious."

"I was referring to anyone lurking about..."

Those words always made him feel foolish. "... anyone who doesn't belong in that place..."

Those words, too.

"... anyone who just didn't belong there," he said.

"Just the usual," Krissie said, and shrugged.

Hawes loved the way she shrugged. "Milk?" she asked. "It's up to you."

"By the usual... ?" Hawes asked.

"The usual," she said, and shrugged again. "I'm sure you know what I mean there. The usual street mix."

Crack dealers and buyers, hookers, hoodlums, the mix." She took a sip of her cup, sipped at the coffee.

"And last night, when you left... nothing but the mix."

"Just the mix."

"How about inside the church?" Carella asked.

"See anything strange there? Anything out of the normal?"

"No."

"When you left the, office.., this was at five, you say?"

"Five, a little bit after."

"Were any of the file cabinets open?"

"They're never locked. We have keys, but..."

"No, I mean, were any of the drawers standing open?"

"Any papers on the floor?"

"No. Of course not."

"Everything neat and orderly."

"Yes."

"Miss. Lund," Hawes said, "Father Michael's housekeeper m in recent weeks he'd been taking a strong church stand ag

"Well, you don't think that had anything to do with his m

"What are you referring to?"

"The tithe."

"The tide?" Carella asked, puzzled.

"Tithe," she said, "tithe. The congregation is supposed t ten percent of its earnings to the church. As a tithe. An familiar with that word? Tithe."

"Well, yes, it's just..."

He was thinking the word sounded medieval. He was thinking it should sound like a word that should be lurking about in the here and there, a word that seemed out of place, a word that just didn't belong to this day and age. Tithe. Altogether archaic. Like a chastity belt. He would not say this.

"What about this.., tithe?" he asked.

"Well, she probably meant the sermons."

"What sermons?"

"Some pretty stiff sermons about shortchanging the church."

"Shortchanging?"

"I see. How many of these sermons were there?" "Three. I know the one who gave them. All hellfire and brimstone. Unusual for the time. It was normally..."

She hesitated.

"A very gentle man," she said at last.

"But not in these sermons," Hawes said.

"No. I suppose... well, the church really is in need of repairs. Nothing's been done to it in years. And, you know, the neighborhood church may be falling apart, but a lot of parishioners come from six blocks away, things are much better. Well, you know that's a slum right next door to the buildings doormen. So he really has the rights to ask the proper tithe. Because, honestly, I think it would be even worse by now if wasn't for the work Father Michael does there. there," she said, correcting herself.

"What sort of work?" Carella asked.

"Well, trying to promote harmony," she said "especially among the neighborhood there is a mix of Italian, Irish, Hispanic and so on. I am I telling, you? Father Michael wonders with those kids what happened there on Easter Sunday..."

Carella shook his head.

So did Hawes.

"Well, it's your precinct," Kfissie said, "I don't you know what happened there? On Easter Sunday?"

"No, what happened there?" Carella asked, and tried to remember if he'd had the duty on Easter Sunday.

"Tiffs was late in the afternoon," Krissie said, "tiffs was running into the church with his head all bloody. Half a dozen kids were chasing him with stickball bats and garbage cans. They fought him into the church, fought up the center aisle to the altar. Father Michael stood his ground. Told them to get out of the church. Walked them fight up the aisle to the door, escorted them out. Not to come back until they knew how to behave in the house. I don't know who the kids were, neighborhood kids, I'm sure their names are in your records, just look up Easter Sunday.

Anyway, that's the kind of thing I mean. Father Michael was a strong force in that neighborhood. His congregation should have realized that. Instead of getting so offended. By the errnons, I mean."

"The money sermons," Carella said.

"The tithe sermons, yes," Krissie said.

"Some of his parishioners were offended by "Yes. By him or his congregation..., well, , in effect."

"I see."

"From the pulpit."

"I see."

"One of the parishioners, I forget his name, distributed a letter. Jesus had driven money-changers from the temple and here they back again..., he was referring to Father you know. And the tithe."

"They must have been pretty strong Hawes said.

"Well, no stronger than the cult sermons. I those, too." "What sermons?" Carella asked.

"About the Church of the Bomless One."

"What's the Church of the Bornless One?"

"You mean you don't.., come on, you're me. It's right in
Only four blocks St. Catherine's."

Hawes was wondering if Krissie Lund had thought of becoming

"I take it that the Church of the Bomless One some kind of
said.

"Devil.worship," Krissie said.

"And you're saying that Father Michael some sermons about

"About Satan being worshipped within a throw of St. Catherine's
"Then that's what she was talking about," said, to Carella
housekeeper."

Carella nodded.

He reached into his jacket, took out his and removed a photograph
the front-
cover "Ever see this before?" he asked, and handed the picture
to Krissie.

The picture had been taken last night, by a police photographer
Polaroid with a flash. Her exposure had been a bit off, and
wasn't as true as the actual red of the paint the graffiti artist
used, nor was the green of the gate quite as bilious.

But it was a good picture nonetheless.

Kfissie studied it carefully:

"What's it supposed to be?" she asked.

"Ever go around to the Tenth Street side of the "Yes?"

"Past the garden gate?"

"Yes?"

"This is what's painted on that gate."

"I'm sorry, I never noticed it," she said, and the photo, mean something?"

Carella was thinking it meant that Satan was worshipped w throw of St. Catherine's church, where a black kid had so from an angry white gang on Eas' Sunday, and where an off parishioner circulated a letter about money-changers in temple. He was thinking that in the world of the Precinct, far uptown, a things be considered a reasonable cause for murder.

"Excuse me, Miss. Lund," Hawes asked, "but i that Poison Krissie said, apparently knowing what he was talking about Opium."

She had trained herself never to respond to name Mary Ann

So when she heard the voice behind her speaking Spanish, she'd the moment she'd come to this city, she kept right no attention to it. She was not Ann. She was certainly not speaking Spanish.

And then the voice said, "Ai, Mariucha," was the Spanish Mary. She had called Mariucha in the Mexican prison. nick followed her to Buenos Aires. apparently here to this city walking. Her heart was pounding.

"Mariucha, despacio," the voice said, and men fell into s one on either side of her.

"Get away from me," she said at once, "or I'll yell for a

"Oh, dear," the handsome one said in Spanish.

"We don't want to hurt you," the ugly one said in Spanish

Which meant he did want to hurt her, and would hurt her.

There was a switchblade knife in her handbag.

She was prepared to use it if she had to.

They were coming up Concord, walking away from the cluster that in a city this size passed for a campus. The school known as The Thousand Window Bakery, a reference too historical for Marilyn to understand, but accurate enough in that the complex seemed to be fashioned entirely glass. This was at the center of the that was Isola, equidistant from the river and south, only slightly closer to old Seawall downtown than Riverhead all the way uptown. The neighborhood was a good mix of shops and restaurants, theaters, apartment buildings with

there ahead on the corner a pair of 5 cops basking in the sunshine.

"Don't do anything foolish," the handsome one in Spanish.

She walked directly to the policemen.

"These men are bothering me," she said.

The cops looked at the two men.

The handsome one smiled.

The ugly one shrugged.

Neither of them said a word. They seemed recognize that in their mouths in this and either Spanish or broken English they'd be in serious trouble.

Marilyn kept waiting for the cops to something.

The cops kept looking at the two men.

They were both well-dressed. Dark suits. shirts. A red tie on one of them, a blue tie on other. Both wearing pearl grey fedoras elegant-looking. Two legitimate enjoying a fine spring day.

"Guys," one of the cops said, "the lady wish to be bothered this in the fraternal tone that men when they are suggest men that nice piece of ass here and we could all handily her were we of a mind to, but out the goodness and genero

masculine let's not bother the lady if she does not wish
hmmhh? Marilyn almost expected him wink at the handsome o
the ugly the ribs.

The handsome one shrugged, as if to say all men of the wo
understand the va women.

The ugly one sighed heavily, as if to say We are all occa
burdened by these beautiful, unpredictable creatures, esp
certain times of the month. Then he took the handsome one
him away quickly and silently.

"Okay?" the cop asked Marilyn.

She said nothing.

The ugly one was looking back at her.

There was a chilling promise in his eyes.

All of the windows in the station house were open.

The barred windows on the ground-
floor level, the grilled windows on the
upper stories. It suddenly occurred to Carella that a pol
looked like a prison. Even with the windows open, it look
prison. Grey, soot-
covered granite blocks, a roof stained with a
century's worth of shit, green globes flanking the entranc
announcing in faded white numerals that here the Eight-
Seven, take it or
leave it. Carella had taking it for a good many years now

The priest's papers were waiting on his desk.

Not eighteen hours after the discovery of Father s body,
papers those strewn office floor, those still in his file
desk had already been examined by the lab sent back uptow
messenger. This was fast work. But the Commissioner himse
be black and who attended a Baptist church in the Diamond
city where he'd been born and raised . had morning made a
appearance on The Show, announcing by network to the nati
city could not, and would not tolerate wanton murder of a
God of persuasion. Not too many day-

watch cops caught show because they were already out on the asking discreet questions in an attempt to abet the investigating cops of the Eight-Seven w simultaneously mollifying the irate Commissi himself. Up in the Eight-Seven, life went on as priest or not, this was just another murder, no part of the city with weeds.

It was lunchtime in the squadroom The detectives sat around their desks with their sleeves pistols. Sandwiches and coffee, pizza and were spread out on the desks before them. Only waved to Carella as he came in. They were busy listening to Parker.

"There is not going to be no mystery in Dallas murders, I mean it," Parker said.

"There's never any mystery," Brown said.

"That I know. But what I'm saying, this is to be even less of a mystery than there usually is. Especially since it's Texas."

"Love or money," Meyer said. "Those are only two reasons."

"That's why there are no mysteries, is what I'm saying,"

"Tell me all about it," Parker said. "But what I'm saying is that the mystery here is who the guy is."

What he is, is a crazy." "That's the third reason," Klingman said. "Lunacy."

"There's nothing mysterious about any lunatic in the world," Klingman said. "This thing in Dallas is gonna turn out to be just another story. The newspapers and the TV are saying it is, I'll bet you a hundred dollars."

It's a crazy running around killing blondes. That's all it is. If you catch this guy, he'll be nuttier than a Hershey bar, you know that."

Carella wasn't particularly eager to tackle the priest's case. He had gone downtown directly after they'd left the Lund apartment for Ballistics where he was trying to pry loose a report on the armed robbery. This meant that

now had to wade through all this stuff by F. The papers were large manila lopes marked EVIDENCE. The papers

s, however, were not evidence per se, in the prints lifted already been :1 and filed downtown. Without the prints, the papers, which might or might contain information.

But the Police Department had a lot of manila of various them printed with Word EVIDENCE, and a cop was likely as these envelopes whenever he wanted to send or take something even if something was a ham sandwich he planned to for lunch had examined these the lab had later stuffed them into several envelopes, and then had stamped, : envelopes RUSH, and furnished them MESSENGER because a priest had been this city with a Irish-

Catholic police and then had wrapped the little red string red buttons, and here they were on desk alongside another envelope did in fact contain a ham sandwich he planned for

He hated paperwork.

This was a whole hell of a lot of paperwork desk.

The clock on the wall read ten minutes to "What this is," "is a guy mother was a blonde, she used to lock him close 'cause he wet the bed. So now got a thing about blondes. blondes his mother. So he's got to kill every blonde in view of them locks him in the again."

"Like I said," Parker said.

"My mother is blonde," Kling said.

"Did she lock you in the closet every day?"

"She chained me in the basement."

"Because you wet the bed?"

"I still wet the bed." "He thinks he's kidding," Parker said.

"What this thing in Texas is," Kling said, "is a guy who wife he hates. So first he kills the two blondes he already the next one'll be his wife, and he'll kill two more blondes."

and everybody'll think it's a crazy blonde-hater doing the murders. When instead it's just this little guy, he's an accountant or wife is a big fat blonde he's been married to for forty years, stand her, he has to get rid of her."

"No, I don't think this is no smoke screen," Parker said.

Carella figured he'd sooner or later have to dig into this stuff here on his desk. It was just that it looked so for those envelopes full of papers. Stalling, he picked up the dialed the lieutenant's extension.

"How do you feel?" Byrnes asked.

"What do you mean?"

"Your headache."

"All gone."

"The P.C. was on television this morning," said.

"Yes, I know."

"A speech for every occasion, right? So what do think? An

"Not yet. I just got the priest's papers, there's a lot s here."

"What kind of papers?"

"Correspondence, sermons, bills, like that."

"Any diary?"

"Not according to the lab inventory." "Too bad," Byrnes s hesitated said, "Steve..." and hesitated again and finally be able to tell the Commissio something soon."

"I understand."

"So let me know the minute anything good."

"I will."

"It was probably some kind of bug," Bymes "the headache."

And hung up.

Carella put his own phone back on the cradle, looked at a unopened evidence again. The pile hadn't diminished one

decided to go to the Clerical Office for a coffee. When h his own desk, they still talking about the murders in Dal

"You want to know what I think it is?" said.

"What is it, Genero?"

"It's the full moon, is what it is." "Yes, Genero, thank said. "Go the hall and take a pee, okay?"

"It's a known fact that when there's a moon. "

..

"What has the full moon got to do with "Nothing. But..."

"Then what the fucka you talkin' about?"

"I'm saying in the same week there's two dead blondes is saying. And there happens to be a full moon this week."

"There is no such thing as a full moon that lasts a whole said. "And also, what makes you think a full moon here in means there's also a full moon in Dallas, Texas, where th lunatic is killin' these blondes?"

"It's a known fact," Genero said, "that there was a full when the first blonde turned up. And the moon was still p night when the second blonde turned up."

"Go take your pee, willya?"

Carella looked at all the evidence bags and which one he first. He looked up at the clock. Almost a quarter past o not think of a single other thing that might keep him sta

paperwork. So he opened the bag the ham sandwich in it.

Alternately chewing on his sandwich and sipping his coffee
browsing no sense

into icy-

cold water all at once ... through the papers in the first
envelope. From the list on the outside of the envelope by
lab whose initials were --

and through his own corroboration of the the
first envelope contained only bills, canceled and check s
checks were printed the heading St. Catherine's Roman Cat
Corporation, and beneath that Michael Birney, PSSCA. All
were for Father Birney had incurred as parish priest.

were bills and consequent checks for electricity. ... and
... and snow plowing... ... and food... ... and postage...
salaries... Martha Hennessy, for example, got a check wee
after deductions of \$21.02 FICA and \$34.00 for Federal Wi
Kristin Lund got a check every other week \$241.37 after o
\$21.63 for FICA \$25.00 for Federal Withholding Tax... "Yo
what this is?" Meyer "This is a guy who went out with thi
Marie, whatever her name was... "Matilda," Parker said. "

"Matilda, and it was a first date, and he score but she t
So he got so off, he killed her. Then last night..."

"Where'd you get Mary or Marie?" Brown "When the woman's
Matilda?"

"What difference does it make what her was? She's dead. T

"I'm just curious how you got Mary Matilda?"

"I made it up, okay?"

"You musta."

... and telephone bills, and bills service and a local ga
for the church's missalettes, and mortgage bills, and bil
maintenance of the church grounds, and medical insurance
newspaper delivery bills, and bills for flowers for the a
dozens of other bills, all of which Father Michael paid l
on the first and the fifteenth of every month. There were

for personal clothing, and these for relatively small amounts. One such item was for a new down parka at two hundred and twenty-seven dollars; it had been a winter.

"What I'm saying," Meyer said, "is that last night, guy is off just thinking about it. So he goes out and finds himself a kill."

"How long's he gonna stay pissed off, this guy?"

"I'll bet you the one last night was the end of it."

"Until there's another full moon," Genero said.

"Will you fuck off with your full moon?" Parker

"One thing I'm glad of," Brown said.

"Tomorrow's your day off," Parker said.

"That, too. But I'm also glad this lunatic ain't it here." Parker said.

priest sent quarterly checks to the .se the last one had the of March for something he listed as "zum" on the stub, idea what this might be. Six checks had been written: the Michael's death:

A check to Bruce Macauley Tree Care, Inc.

"Spraying done on 5/19" in the amount of A check to US Spr
"Service thru 5/17 the amount of \$176.80.

A check to Isola Bank and Trust for " mortgage" in the amount of \$1480.75.

A check to Alfred Hart Insurance "Honda Accord LX, Policy 9872724" amount of \$580.

A check to Orkin Exterminating Co. Inc. "May services" in the amount of \$36.50. '

And a check to The Wanderers for deposit" in the amount of

was it.

Each month, the balance in the St. Roman Catholic Church leveled off at about a thousand dollars. There to be nothing about Father accounts.

The next evidence envelope contained correspondence.

The first letter Carella took out of the envelope was written on the address of a woman's hand to Father Michael Birney Catherine's Office. He looked at the address. Mrs. Irene Brogan. The postmark was from San Diego, California, and

May 19. He opened the envelope and took the letter from it.

My dearest brother, I am now in receipt of yours of May 12th. I tell you with what a saddened heart I hasten to...

"I'm back," Hawes said from the gate in the slatted rail fence. "You solve it yet?" "What's this case you're working, any more?" turning to Carella.

Carella told him they had a D.O.A. stab-and-slash, weapon unknown, housekeeper secretary last ones to see him alive, wild priest in church and the rectory, random latents from the papers he were most likely secretary's. He also told Parker that the Devil had dusted the priest and addition to the Devil the priest also pissed some local youngsters as well as his own, congregation.

Parker thought this was very comical. He was laughing. So did

"This is his correspondence here," Carella Hawes. "Just come on, gonna have a lot of fun there," said, "reading a priest's letters." burst laughing again. Genero started laughing again, ; other giggling like teenagers. Hawes ;d it was spring fever.

At his own desk, Carella went back to the letter Father M. sister:

My dearest brother, I am now in receipt of yours of May 12th. I tell you with what a saddened heart I hasten to respond. I have you managed to construct such a tower of doubt for yourself? don't you feel you should relate your fears to the bishop?

diocese? I just don't know how to counsel or advise you.

I wish I could be closer to you during this difficult time. The matter worse is that Roger and I are leaving for Japan tomorrow and we won't be back till the tenth of June. I'll try to call you when we leave, so we can have a good long telephone visit. Perhaps the skies above will look a bit clearer.

Meanwhile, let me say only this: I know that you are a devoted servant of God and that however troubled you may now be, through prayer the way to enlightenment and salvation.

Your loving sister, Irene turned over the envelope again.

He pulled the phone to him, lifted the receiver, asked the operator in the San Diego area dialed 1-619-555-1212 for information, and asked for Roger Brogan at the address on the back of the envelope. He dialed the number and let the phone ring twenty times before hanging up.

"Here's something," Hawes said.

She did not think they were policemen. If they were policemen, they would have identified themselves once to the street-corner cops she'd Flash the tin, and then they would reveal themselves as part of the fraternal order of law enforcement officers. So they weren't cops.

They were Spanish-speaking. This fact alone had known the name Mary Ann and had known the nickname Mariucha. This frightened even her, for she could have got the Mary Ann Houston, but not the Mariucha. She didn't know where they'd come from either La Fortaleza or Buenos Aires, but she knew they'd been asking questions at the school either they'd been snooping around B.A. El Estudiante here. Moreover, they had tracked the school. Which meant they knew she lived as well.

She knew she should tell Willis, but she was afraid of losing him. She knew too, that these men represented might somehow rub him out. She knew problems for him on the job. She knew him too dearly for that. She couldn't have brought this trouble upon herself, whatever it was, and she had to handle it herself.

Which was why she had to get a gun; the handle of the blade knife seemed suddenly

inadequate for defense, especially against the big, ugly
And where?

The gun laws were tough in this state. You needed a permit
could walk into a shop and pick off the shelf. And you ne
good k, ason for wanting that permit. So how far would sh
buy a gun? Even in the immediately joining states, didn't
have to file applications well before letting you walk ou
where did the gun laws get easy? far across the river and
trees? How far east, south or west? Where in these g Unit
a person legally buy to kill her husband or her mother or
Spanish-speaking goons who'd called her by her

name, her Buenos Aires street name?

Where?

She was living with a cop and personally knew at three do
this city, had gone out to with them, been in their homes

a single one of them she could ask about ,tting a-
well, maybe.., yes,
that was a . Eileen Burke. Call her up, ask her out to E
casually swing the an around to how and where a person ac
in this. no, she was too

smart, she'd tip in a minute, know immediately it was Mar
who was looking for the Besides, she wasn't sure Eileen e
Wasn't sure, for that matter, that any of friends liked h
former hooker.

Hookers knew people who knew where to' guns. In Houston,
known where to gun.

In Buenos Aires, she'd have known where a gun.

But this was here and this was now, and been out of the l

Or had she?

"If you're looking for a motive, this could motive," Hawe
handed a sheet of across the desk. It was the sort of nev
ago would have been typed first and mimeographed. Today,
as a printout and had later been photocopied, copier stre

page being the only duplication. Carella wondered how many were distributed. He also wondered how had got along before Xerox Xeroxing? That was already the Stone Age.

Clerical Office's new fax machine was the miracle.

My Fellow Parishioners:

For the past several weeks now, Michael Birney, the pastor who guides the flock of St. Catherine's Church, has once more thought it seen fit to use the pulpit as a scolding board for our... 'scolding board'?" Carella asked.

"Just keep reading," Hawes said, "it's self-explanatory."

... scolding board for our congregation. On these occasions he has taken it upon himself to rail, nag, upbraid, revile, and

"See what I mean?" Hawes said.

"Mmm," Carella said.

... the good and decent people of this parish for failing to meet their financial obligations by way of the weekly tithe to the Lord. The Lord has pointed out that there are no less than forty-eight references to the tithe in scriptures. He has seen fit to quote many of the Old Testament passages, the most recent of which he included in his Sunday's sermon at a time of the year better suited to matters of the harvest. I quote it again now:

"From the days of your fathers you have turned aside from my commandments and have not kept them. Return to me, and I will return your love. I am the Lord of hosts.

But you say, "How shall we return?"

Will man rob God? Yet you are to me.

But you say, "How are we robbing In your tithes and offerings?" You are cursed with a curse, for you are robbing. Bring the full tithes into the storehouse that there may be food in my house!"

This from a spiritual leader, who has nothing but kindness and generosity from good people of this parish. My fellow parishioners would like to offer my own from the Holy Bible. This is from the Gospel According to John, Chapter 2, verses 14 to 16: "In the temple who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers at their business. Making a whip of cords, he drove with the sheep out of the temple and he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned the tables. And he told those who sold pigeons, "Take these things hence; ye shall not make my Father's house a trade!"

Father Michael Birney is making our Father's House a house of trade.

We are all well aware of our obligation to the Lord, we know that five percent of our annual income is expected by way of offering to the church. But we refuse to be turned into a church of bookkeepers. Let Father Michael count the offerings again another time, and then let him count his blessings as well. If the will of God might then do well to apologize from the pulpit for the parishioners of robbing from... "Catch the last line," Harry.

... robbing from the Lord! Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Yours in Christ, Arthur L. Farnes "Well..." Carella said, "I'll write a letter back."

"I know. You dismiss a loony right off because they think nobody writes a letter to the whole nation and then actually goes out to knock on doors and suppose..."

"Uh-huh."

suppose this guy really was mad enough to go juke this parishioner. He sounds pretty angry, doesn't he? I'm not a Catholic, so I can't say. "Me neither," Carella said. He considered a lapsed Catholic. "I said, "Shame on you! Okay, so I don't know how far you can go with a priest assigned to your church, if in fact he is assigned, that's all I don't know."

"Me neither."

"But let's say he's assigned and let's say you're unhappy with it."

he's bugging you paying your dues..."

"Your tithe." .

"Same thing, so you write a letter.., for purpose? To get
Do they do that in' Catholic Church? Recall a priest who
with his congregation?"

"I really don't know."

"Neither do I."

"Or do you write to warn him that if he doesn't let it out you
overturn his tables? I really, Steve, a lot of the stuff
like a warning."

"Where does it sound like a warning?"

"You don't think this wh money-changer-in-the-
temple stuff sounds
warning?"

"No."

"You don't?"

"I really don't. Where else do you see warning?"

"Where else? Okay, where else? How about here, example? I
dah,
dit-dah, dit-
dah, di... here. "Let him count his blessings.' Doesn't
that sound like a warning?"

"No."

"Let the man count his blessings? That doesn't like a war

"No, it doesn't."

"Let him count his blessings before it's too late!"

"Where does it say that?"

"Say what?"

"'Before it's too late.' "

"It doesn't. I'm extrapolating."

"What does that mean, extrapolating?"

"It means to infer from what you already know."

"How do you know that?"

"I just happen to know it."

"I still don't think if you ask a man to count his it's r
warning."

"You don't."

"No, I don't."

"Okay, how about here?" A noble man of God ght then do wel
from the pulpit for his parishioners of robbing from the
right?"

"Where does it say. "Or else'?"

here. "Pride goeth before destruction, and spirit before
3esn't say. "Or else.' "

the code for. "Or else.' l.

çck vcu clcn't want to go talk to this guy,
we won't go talk to forget it. I just thought..."

"He sounds like a very religious man, that's Carella said
people like that in world."

Like my father, Hawes thought, but didn't Who named me Co
Puritan Priest.

"You want to know something?" he said. "In world, there a
very religious people are out of their minds, did you kno
them have been known to stick knives in people. Now I'm r
Arthur L. F which is the name of a lunatic to begin with

done the priest, but I am saying you letter like this one death threat is I'm saying, and we'd be very dumb cops if on this guy's door right this what we should do."

"I agree with you," Carella said.

Schuyler Lutherson wanted to know who disciples had spray Catherine's churchyard gate.

Because, see," he said, "I don't want coming here."

Schuyler Lutherson was not his real name, real name was S nice enough except that the Samuel sounded like a prophet (which was the last thing on to sound like) and the Leeds anufacturing town in the north of England. his great-great-great-grandfather had been ironmonger in Leeds before coming to America, that was ancient history and Schuyler chose t more fancifully.

He had picked the given name Schuyler not se it meant a "wise man" in (actually, he was quite unfamiliar with the because it sounded like "sky," in the skies above, or the or the ,m of God above, from which an angel once fallen. Satan himself who'd been y expelled from Heaven, hurled t stratosphere to the fiery lower And was not Satan simulta as whose name Samuel Leeds could not out of worshipful hu whose he could at least echo alliteratively... Lucifer, . rhyme slantingly... Lucifer, .-. the surname achieving gr Lutherson, the son of Luther, the son of leader of the Ch Bornless One, all Satan!

INOT bad for a kid of nineteen, which was how old had bee originated his church in Angeles. He was now thirty-nine years old, that been twenty years ago, away back in the days of flower ch remember, Maude? When was preaching love? Except Schuyler the pulpit of the Church of the Bt One, where between the a voluntary "altar" each week, he preached opposite of lo hate, scorching after pussy with the white-hot scorn of his Everything in the worship of Satan was a opposites, an exercise in r obversi Through hate, love. Through denial, Through darkn Through evil, good.

Even Schuyler's carefully cultivated supported the tenets. Not for sham look of a bearded devil with arched e nor for silken crimson robes and hood. Was he a true and sacred p dedicated to the Infernal One, or merely a caricature? Would on earth appear man as the Devil, or would he in his infi assume the shape of some lesser form? likewise, and even son of Lucifer's Son, Lutherson. t L lift the cuff earthly expose a furry ankle and a hoof?. Would he advertise his beacons to unbelievers? Would he blow the breath of brims from his regurgitate purple vomit into the faces of would proper behavior and Lord Satan's son and servant?

Schuyler Lutherson was blond.

He had blue eyes.

he'd served in a juvenile detention facility in fornia, back before he'd changed his still worked out at a gym near the church three .times a result, he had the slim, lithe, sinewy body of a long-distance runner.

His nose would have been Grecian perfection, had it not c at that selfsame .etention facility, where the fair-haired, ,-cheeked

as-yet-

unborn Schuyler Lutherson forced to protect his ass from older, huskier determined to have a taste of it at all co he'd had in mind did not include the spleen he'd suffered broken the Schuyler's nose and declared his intention of "private and personal pussy." The used a two-by-four by of discouragement, picking it up from a pile of in the carpe wielding it like a bat. The older boy never bothered him anyone else.

Schuyler had a wide androgynous mouth, with the lower lip screen siren, and the rather

upper lip of a politician. He had even white the better t my dear. That they capped was a matter of small import or

he smiled, the gates to the infernal chambers

wide and eternal midnight beckoned.

was. smiling now, wanting to know who ---
had painted the pentagram on
the church

He spoke deliberately and precisely.

"Who, exactly, painted the pentagram on fucking gate?" he

Through obscenity, purity.

The three looked at him.

Two women and a man. Each of the women served as altars n
Through Schuyler knew them intimately. The man knew intim
through the public rites of fornication that followed each
the women was named Laramie. The was named Coral. These w
real The man was named Stanley. This was his name; who on
want to change his to Stanley unless he planned on becomi
was a salary-

drawing church Laramie and Coral were disciples, and did
not salaries per se, but money somehow stuck to fingers.
black and Coral was Stanley was Hispanic; this was a regu
here. Together they pondered who have been foolish enough
the church I with a pentagram.

"Because now, see," Schuyler said, "the dead."

Stanley shook his head, not in sorrow, dismay: the priest
dead, someone had painted a pentagram on St. gate. Stanle
massive and covered lntr tawny tancrlad hair that ava hi

:ed lion; when he shook his head, the was monumental.

"We have nothing to hide here, that' true," ler said.

Both women nodded, a symphony in black and togetherness. C
wearing a paisley skirt and a white peasant blouse, no br
long blonde hair, eyes as blue as Schuyler's, a button no
freckles. Laramie was • skin-
tight jeans, boots, and a sweater. She as
tall and strikingly good-

looking, a Masai miraculously transported to the big bad city. comparison, Coral looked like a prairie which incidentally she'd been before east to join Schuyler's church thinking hard. Who could have been dumb to paint a pentagon churchyard gate? was the burning question of the day.

see," Schuyler said, "suppose the police raising some of questions that asshole raised? Suppose they come here and or that, see, as for example, are we X during the mass, we controlled • ., see? We can always tell the Man we are doing anything else at our services, by the way are private services not to the public except by invitation, is what we tell them then we'll have police shit, we'll have them coming around breaking our balls merely on principle, what cops know how well. Because they are going to figure, see, in their limit somebody painted a pentagram on the gate, then maybe that did the And they're going to be all over us like locusts.

"Excuse me, Sky," Coral said.

"Yes, Coral."

Gently. His eyes caressing her. He would to serve as altar Saturday night, twenty-sixth, a night of no particular significance the church calendar except that it followed immediately after the high Feast of the Expulsion. The two most "religious" holidays were and All Hallows' Eve. But these were nights abandoned of the Expulsion traditionally more sedate. This was why Saturday following was generally a time of greater release realization. Coral made a perfect altar. Lying on the dra her legs spread, her hands candelabra, she was a woman in twitching in expectation. Even standing him now, she shifted to foot, her ribs twisting her skirt like a little girl, two

"I feel we should open this to the congregation, Sky, perhaps someone midst-

perhaps through or perhaps through just sheer stupidity -- has church in a precarious position, Sky. And we should have was that painted the on the gate to come forward and admit perhaps go to the police voluntarily, himself or herself it was they done. So investigation would end right there, actually put that symbol on the gate. Is what think, Sky.

Flat midwestern voice, little gap between her two front teeth. She pulled her skirt like a little girl on to recite. Like to do a million things in the right fucking minute, he thought.

"I think Coral's right," Stanley said, nodding his assive head. "Throw it open to the "

i Throw it open wide to the congregation, Schuyler

"... this Saturday night, before the mass actually before the Introit. Explain to them in jeopardy here because of some sin in all innocence..."

s," Laramie said.

Woman of few words.

Said her piece, did her little Masai dance, and got off to the

"Unless whoever painted the star also killed the "

looked at her.

you think that's really a possibility?" he "After what the

She shrugged.

The shrug made it abundantly clear the priest had said completely out of proper mind, taken seed as a motive for murder.

"A total asshole," Schuyler said. "If he'd mouth shut..."

"But he didn't."

This from Laramie again, who made an keeping her mouth shut for a long time.

"No, that's true," Schuyler said, "he Which is why we now have to be in a that is potentially, see, dangerous. I can tell don't let the policemen coming here. I don't them looking into this or that. Discovering that girls perform certain parts of the ritual. On occasion we've used harmless controlled substances in suppositions. Discovering that on occasion we've even small animals during the

though I imagine that's against the fucking law, is it? p
the priest made enough of a fuss the pulpit, brought enou
us, m what was it, Stanley? --

a neighborhood the side of Christ, can
you believe it? course, illustrates what a threat our chu
illustrates clearly, see, how desperatel Christ-
lovers would love to
drive us non-
existence, murder the infant church in its see. But..."

"Sky."

From Coral. Softly.

"I think we ought to contact the police our selves," she
the mass tomorrow --

right away, in fact., to tell them we're of what's
painted on that gate and to let them we're doing our own
examination..."

The words she used.

'... in an effort to determine who put the star on so he
can come forward and veal who they are, Sky. This way we
police know we're doing thing in our power to cooperate.
some kind of cabal connected with our church the sacred s
priest's gate and then him." "Unless," Laramie said.

They all turned to look at her.

"Unless that's exactly what did happen," she said.

Llewellyn Fames was a tall, rangy white man the speech of
bred city-dweller, and look of a weather-
hardened New England His men's
clothing store was on The Stem Carson and Coles, and he h
from lunch when the detectives walked in at o'clock that
of his lunch to have spilled onto his tie and his vest. g
the only man outside of Homicide Division who still wore
willing to bet he also wore a fedora.

The detectives identified themselves and told l they were
the murder of Michael Birney. Farnes went into a long app
heartfelt eulogy on the priest he recently challenged in

letter, now him a dedicated man of God, a true servant Lord, a gentle shepherd to the flock, and a wonderful human being whose absence sorely felt.

All this with a straight face.

"Mr. Fames," Hawes said, "we were lo through Father Michael's correspondence, came across this letter you sent to congregation."

"Yes," Fames said, and smiled, and head.

"You know the letter I mean, right?"

"Yes. The one I wrote in response to his about the tithe." Fames said.

"Yes," Fames said.

He was still smiling. But now he was Yes, his head went. That letter. response to him chastening us about our obligation. I'm the one who resentment. Yes. Me. Nodding, nodding.

"What about that letter, Mr. Fames?"

"What about it?" Fames said.

"Well, I'd say it was a pretty angry letter, you?"

"Only pretty angry? I'd say it was monumen:hilly "

The detectives looked at him.

"In fact, Mr. Fames," Hawes said, "you wrote things in the paper."

"Yes, I was furious."

"Uh-huh."

"Demanding money that way! As if we weren't giving our families the man had to do."

trust us! But, no! Runs his mouth off at the pulpit instead of week of -and- brimstone sermons better suited to Salem than to this

parish! Never once trusting us!

me," he said, and walked immediately to a man was taking trousers from the "May I help you, sir?" he asked.

"Just looking," the man said. "Are these all the - two longs you have?"

from here to the end of the rack." -. "Thank you," the man

"Let me know if I can be of any assistance," said, and wa the detectives.

g his voice, he said, "That man is a He walked out of her Christmastime an entire suit under the suit he was already after he was gone. Forgive me him, but I'd like to catch "So would we," Carella said.

"You were saying something about trust," sai, "Yes," Fames eyes following the he moved along the rack. "In many church business --

and I mean no bl This is why a tithe is specified in the Bible, so won't be any misunderstanding about the the church to conduct. In order to do you understand? Ten percent, s and white. Five in the basket every week, the five as gifts worthwhile charities. Do you me so far?"

"Yes, we follow you," Carella said.

"Okay. How do you know whether you're five percent in the Instead of two three and a half percent? The answer is you congregation. By trusting them, inspire their trust in to find that of getting a short count every week, generating revenue for the c fool should..."

"Excuse me, but is this the dressing "Yes," Fames said, " curtains Let me roll those trouser cuffs back for you, "T right, I can..."

"No problem at all, sir," Farnes said, and three pairs of were draped man's arm, and rolled back the cuffs, "There "Thank you," the man said.

"Let me know if you need any help," Farnes said, came back

detectives. Lowering his voice he said, "He's going in the pairs. Let's see how many he walks out with."

"You were talking about trust," Hawes said.

"Yes," Farnes said. "I was saying that any fool knows you can't find anything anywhere in business --

if it's the business of saving souls for Jesus
[st-

by not trusting the people you're doing business with. That's what I tried to explain to Father, may God rest his soul, in my

"It didn't sound as if your letter was about that," said.

"It didn't? I thought it did." "Well, for example, Mr. Farnes said, already gone over this with Carella and now himself

"you don't think these do you, are about trust, here, this is what I said, unfolding the letter and finding what

was looking for, "here, Mr. Farnes, 'and he counts out the coins and money-

changers and 1 their tables.' Is that about trust, Mr. Farnes? I'm not turning a place of worship into a place of commerce."

how about this," Hawes said, gathering "right here, Mr. Farnes. Father Birney the offerings again and yet another time, and he counts his blessings as well." you mean by 'let him count his blessings' as "Let him realize that he is blessed with a generous count of

"And this? What does this mean?" "Pride before destruction, and the spirit before Is that about trust?"

"It's about trusting the Lord to show the leads away from your own haughtiness."

"Well, you certainly have an odd way of interpreting your own words," said. "Discuss any of this personally with Father." "Yes. In a good laugh over "A good what?"

"A good laugh. Me and Father Michael."

"Had a laugh over this letter you wrote?"

"Oh, yes. Because I was so incensed, you know." "And he found that

he? That incensed enough..."

"Yes."

"... by the sermons he'd given..."

"Yes." ... "... to have written a letter you described as angry.' He that..."

"Yes, we both did."

"... hilarious."

"Well..."

"Side-splittingly funny."

"No, but we did find it humorous. That That I'd written t
indignant to the congregation when all I had to do, really
Father Michael personally -- as I finally do --
and have a pleasant chat
with him, and the whole thing out."

"So you straightened the whole thing out."

"Yes."

"When?"

"On Easter Sunday. I stopped by in the afternoon , went b
rectory with him. We a good long talk."

"How'd you finally settle it?"

"Father Michael said he would ask each member the congreg
confide in him the amount he she could comfortably afford
each and then he would trust them to contribute amount fa
was all a matter of trust, see. That's what I was able to
we talked. That he should just have a little He glanced t
curtains. The man gone back with the three pairs of pants
through into the store again. There were only two pairs o
over his arm.

a minute, sir!" Fames called.

"Ah, there you are," the man said. "I'll take the I'm wear
them measured,

.. why, yes, sir, certainly, sir," Farnes said, step right
tailor's at the other of the store."

"I left my own pants in the dressing room," man said. "W
there?" "Just have a little trust, sir," Hawes said.

Carella placed the call to the archdiocese four-
fifteen that afternoon.

The man who the phone identified himself as Archbishop Que
secretary and told him that His Emine was out at the mome
he could be assistance. Carella told him this had to do w
was investigating... "Oh, dear."

"Yes, the murder of the priest up here..."

"Ah, yes."

"Father Michael Birney."

"Yes."

"And I'm calling because I'm trying to locate sister, but
answer at the number I..."

"His Eminence has already taken care of the secretary sai

"Taken care of what?"

"Notifying Father Michael's sister."

"In Japan? How'd he...?"

"Her husband's office number was in our here. His Eminenc
get the name hotel from Mr. Brogan's secretary, and he Mr
there. She'll be here Sunday in time the funeral." "Well,
said. "Would you to know if there are any other relatives

"I believe there was only the sister."

"And you say she'll be here Sunday?"

"She's already on the way, sir."

"Well, thank you very much."

"Not at all." Carella put the phone back on the hook.

Already on her way, he thought.

Which meant that whatever had been troubling the good priest was to wait till Sunday, after all.

The man sitting opposite Marilyn was a white man in his early thirties. His name was Shad Russell, and he knew why she was here, making his pitch anyway because he figured it never hurt to try his chance. Shad used to be a gambler in Las Vegas before he got himself settled in various other little enterprises. His pockmarked face from when he was a little kid, and he had a smile that looked as if it could use some fertilizer, and he was as tall as Abraham Lincoln and he thought he had a devastating

Actually, he looked like a crocodile when he smiled.

He was smiling now.

"So old Joe give you my number, huh?" he said.

"Yes," Marilyn said.

"Old Joe Seward," he said, and shook his head.

They were in his room on the second floor old Raleigh Hotel, 1234 Sebastian Avenue, where the Warringer Theater used to be. She came here to Diamondback by taxi. She was wearing jeans and a leather jacket. Her hair was pinned up under a woolen cap. It was a white woman to go alone exclusively black neighborhood to meet a Texas pimp had recommended. It was another flashing long

"How is he?" Shad asked.

"I haven't seen him in years," she said.

"How come you know him?" "He said you could help me find

"But that don't answer my question, does.

Shad said, and smiled his crocodile smile. had the sudden
this was going harder than she'd thought.

"If you think I'm a cop or something..." she "No, I..." :

"... you can call Joe on my credit card, him to..."

"I already did."

The crocodile smile.

"Though not on your credit card."

The smile widening.

"On my own nickel. Right after you hung ask him who this
was that a gun so bad."

"And what'd he tell you?" "He told me you used to work for
eight, nine years ago. When you were still in He said you
piano-

man pimp there in Houston, but he got himself stabbed in
which was when Joe come into your life. He told me you got
ripe old age of and that he paid the five-
bill fine and let walk away
from his stable' cause you asked him and he happens to be
I'm not you're fuzz."

"Then why are you asking me things you already W?"

"I wanted to see if you'd lie."

"I would've."

"I figured. Why you need this piece?"

"Some people are bothering me."

"You going to shoot these people?"

"If I have to."

"And then what?"

"Then what what?" i. "Who do you tell where you got the p

"Not even my priest," Marilyn said.

, I'll just bet you got a priest," Shad said, smiled the
again. "You still in same line of work?"

"

bad. "Cause I could maybe find some major for somebody li
not looking for any major..." really major..."

"... or even minor ones. I need a gun. Can you me one? If

"Think about the other for a minute."

"Not even for a second."

"Think about it," he said, and smiled. "Is

any harm thinking about it?"

"Yes, there is."

"Who you gonna shoot with this gun?"

"That''s none of your business."

"If the gun comes back to me, then it becomes business."

"It won't come back to you, don't worry."

"Are these people pimps? Does this inw prostitution?" "No
told you, I'm not..."

"'Cause I don't want some angry pimp here yellin' one of
to..." "Goodbye, Mr. Russell," Marilyn said, and up, and
shoulder bag, and started for door.

"What'd I do?" Shad asked. "Insult you? fuckin' bad. I go
protect here. I want no gun of mine involved in a family
quarrel with your old man, go settle it him quiet, you do

of mine."

"Thanks, I understand your position. It was meeting you."

"Look at her. All insulted on her fuckin' hi horse. I hit the head, didn't I? You this gun to dust your pimp."

"Yep, right on Goodbye,

the head.

Mr. Russell.

I'll be sure to tell Joe how helpful you were."

"Sit down, what's your fuckin' hurry? If this ain't a pin it? Dope?"

"No."

"You say some people are bothering you, what are they bothering you? Did you forget to pay them for their cocaine?"

"Do you have a gun for me, or don't you? I don't need this really don't."

"A gun will cost you," he said.

"How much?"

"It's a shame you ain't in the trade these days," he said with the crocodile smile. "'Cause I have this very major Colonel who'll be here in the city this weekend, I'm sure we could kind'of barter arrange. "

And suddenly he saw what was in Marilyn's eyes.

"All right, all right, all right," he said, "forget it, all right."

And just as suddenly turned all business.

"What kind of gun did you have in mind?" he asked.

The three who came into the squadroom on morning at the

well, at minutes to eight, actually looked either like wa
twelfth-
century minstrels or gypsy troupe out of Carmen, dependin
perspective. The perspective from Cotton desk was sunwash
hazy, the li slanting in through open windows to create a
effect of golden air afloat dancing dust motes. Out of th
mass there appeared the tentative trio, causing Hawes bli
were witnessing either a mirage or religious miracle.

There were two women and a man.

The man was between and slightly forward of the women, th
flying wedge, so to speak, for such it resembled as the t
through the gate in the slatted-
rail divider and immediately homed in on
the closest desk, which happened to be Hawes's.

perhaps his red hair had served as a beacon. Or perhaps h
sense of authority that naturally attracted anyone seekin
Or perhaps they gravitated toward him because he was the
the squadroom at this ungodly hour of the morning.

The man was wearing bright blue polyester trousers and a
a white collar and alternating red-and-
blue stripes of different widths.

He was a hairy giant of a man, with long tawny tresses an
muscular build. One of the women flanking him was tall an
other was blonde and not quite as tall, and both women we
if to complement the synthetic glitz of the hirsute giant

The blonde was wearing a wide, flaring red skirt and a tu
(no bra, Hawes noticed) that was the same color as the ma
trousers.

She was also wearing sandals, although it wasn't yet summ
black woman was wearing an equally wide, flaring skirt (H
and a turtleneck shin (again, no bra, Hawes noticed) that
of the blonde's hair. She, too, was wearing sandals.

"There's a sign," Hawes said.

All three looked around.

Hawes pointed.

The hand-

lettered sign just to the right of the gate in the railing
read:

STATE YOUR BUSINESS BEFORE ENTERING SQUADROOM "Oh, sorry,
"We didn't notice it.

Slight Hispanic accent.

"The desk sergeant said we should come up," blonde said.
voice. Almost a whisper. it compelled attention. Eyes as
stretched beyond the squadroom windows. Voice flat as the
Kansas. Hawes visualize cornfields. "My name is Coral And
said.

Hawes nodded.

"I'm Stanley Garcia," the man said.

"Laramie Forbes," the black woman said.

"Is it all right to come in?" Coral asked.

"You're in already," Hawes said. "Please down."

Stanley took the chair alongside the desk.

the gent, Hawes thought. The women dragged over for themselves
they crossed their legs under voluminous skirts. The movements
days when hippies roamed the earth.

"How can I help you?" he said.

"I'm first deacon at the Church of the One," Stanley said.

The Church of the Bornless One. Devil-
worshi Kristin Lund had said.

Hawes wondered if Coral Laramie were second and third He
what their real names were.

"We're disciples," Laramie said, indicating the blonde with
sideward nod.

She had a husky voice. Hawes wondered if she sang in the choir. He wondered if there were choirs in churches that worshipped

"We're here about the dead priest," Stanley said.

Hawes moved a pad into place.

"No, no," Stanley said at once. "Nothing like that."

"Nothing like what?" Hawes said. His pencil was poised above the paper like a guillotine about to drop.

"We had nothing to do with his murder," Stanley said.

"That's why we're here," Coral said.

"Let's get some square handles first," Hawes said.

They looked at him blankly.

"Your real names," he said.

"Coral is my real name," the blonde said, offended.

Hawes figured she was lying; nobody's real name was Coral.

Nor Laramie, either, for that matter.

"How about you?" he asked the other woman.

"I was born there," she said.

"Where's there?" "Laramie, Texas," she said. Note of challenge in her husky voice. Dark eyes flashing.

"Does that make it your real name?" Hawes asked.

"How'd you like to be Henrietta all your life?"

Hawes thought Cotton was bad enough. legacy of a religious man. He believed Cotton Mather was the greatest of the Puritan He wrote "Henrietta Forbes" on the studied it briefly, nodded and immediately asked the blonde, "How do you Anderson?"

"With an. "O,' "she said.

"Where are you from originally, Coral?"

"Indiana."

"Lots of Corals out there, I'll bet."

She hesitated, seemed about to flare, and smiled instead, little gap between her tw upper front teeth. "Well, it was a guess," she said, still smiling, looking very like a Coral at that moment. Hawes ima pigtailed tied with polka-dot rags. He nodded,

"Cora Lucille Anderson" on the pad, and then "And you, Stanley," Stanley said. "But in Spanish."

"Which is?"

"Estaneslao." "Thanks," Hawes said. "Now what about pries

"We're here about the gate, actually," Coral uncrossing her arms, leaning forward e skirt tented, hands clasped, elbows resting on the Sixties again. Hawes was swept with sudden wave of no

"What gate?" he said.

"The churchyard gate."

"What about it?"

"What's painted on the gate," Coral said.

"The pentagram."

"The star," Stanley said.

"Inverted," Laramie said.

"Uh-huh," Hawes said.

Let them run with it, he thought.

"We know what you must be thinking," Stanley said. His ac

more pronounced now.

Hawes wondered if he was getting nervous. He said nothing.

"Because of the star," Laramie said.

"And its association to Satanism," Coral said.

"Uh-huh," Hawes said.

"Which many people misunderstand, of course," Coral said, gap-toothed smile again.

"In what way?" Hawes asked. "Is the pentagram misunderstood?"

"Yes."

"In that it's upside down," Stanley said.

"Inverted," Laramie said.

"May I borrow your pencil?" Coral said.

"Sure," he said, and handed it to her.

"And f'll need a piece of paper."

He tore a page from the back of the pad and handed it to her.

"Thanks," she said.

He noticed that she was holding the pencil in her left hand, not her right.

He wondered if left-handedness had anything to do with Devil worship. He wondered if they were all left-handed.

"This is what a star looks like," she said, and began drawing. "The five-pointed star we see on the American flag, a sheriff's star, they all look like this."

Hawes watched as she drew the star's look shape.

"There," she said.

"Uh-huh," he said.

"And this is what a star looks like when you it upside do

"When you invert it," Laramie said.

"Yes," Coral said, her head bent over the sheet paper, he moving. "There," she said a and showed the page to Hawes the stars looked like a pair of acrobats cartwheels:

"Uh-huh," Hawes said.

"Do you see the difference?"

"Yes, of course."

"What's the difference?" Coral asked.

"The difference is that the one on the left..."

"Yes, the so-called pure pentagram..."

"Whatever, has only one point on top, whereas the other h

"Yes," Coral said. "And whereas the pure pentagram stands
the symbol of Baphomet..."

"The inverted star..."

"... stands on only one point."

"Indicating the direction to Hell," Laramie said.

"I see," Hawes said. Though he didn't really.

"If you look at the pure pentagram..." Coral said.

"The one on the left," Stanley said.

"Yes," Hawes said.

"You can imagine, can't you," Coral said, "a man standing
widespread., those are the two lower points of the star.
outstretched., those are the two middle points. His head
uppermost point." "I see," Hawes said again, trying hard
man inside the upright star.

"In ancient times..." Coral said.

"Oh, centuries ago," Stanley said.

"The white magicians..."

"This has nothing to do with their color," Laramie said.

"No, only with the kind of magic they performed," Coral s
magic."

"Yes," Hawes said.

"As opposed to black magic," Stanley said.

"Yes."

"These white magicians," Coral said, "used the pentagram

the goodness of man..."

"... because it showed him standing upright," Laramie said.

"But in the church of the opposite..." Coral said.

"Where good is evil and evil is good..."

"In the church of the contrary..." Coral said.

"Where to lust is to aspire..."

"And to achieve is to satisfy all things carnal..."

"The pentagram has been turned upside down..."

Coral said.

"Inverted," Laramie said.

"So that the horns of the goat..."

"... the Satanic symbol of lust..."

"... fit exactly into the two upper points..."

"... which represent Good and Evil..."

. the universal duality in eternal conflict..." "And the points," Coral said, "represent in their inverted form a trinity..."

"... the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost," Stanley said.

"... doomed to burn eternally in the flames of Hell..."

"... as indicated by the single point jutting directly down..." Stanley said.

"An upside-down star," Coral said.

"Inverted," Laramie said, and all three fell silent.

"What about it?" Hawes asked.

"Detective l-Iawes." Coral said, "we are aware..."

He wondered how she knew his name.

"... that the star painted on St. Catherine's gate might
minds of the police..."

Sergeant Murchison had probably given it to her downstairs

"... to the murder of the priest there."

"But," Laramie said.

"But," Coral said, "we want you to know that we plan to c
congregation tonight and find out whether somebody if any
that star on the churchyard gate." "And if they did..." S

"... we'll make damn sure that person comes right over he
about it his own self. So you can question them and see w
to do with it.

The murder. Even if someone, if anyone, is guilty of pair
gate." "Guilt is innocence," Laramie said.

"We'll let you know," Stanley said, and all three rose in
many-
splendored radiance and disappeared into the sunlight and
the gate at which they had originally materialized.

Hawes wondered how Carella was doing out there on the str

On a bright spring morning, it was difficult to think of
slum. There seemed no visible evidence of poverty here. T
walking by a leisurely pace were not dressed in tatters.
flowerpots with blooms in them on fire escapes and window
window curtains flapping in the early morning breeze seem
fresh did the laundry hanging on backyard clotheslines.

The sanitation trucks had been through early, and garbage
lined up empty alon wrought-
iron railings that flanked recently front
stoops. As Carella came up the street, a truck was sprink
gutters, giving the asphalt a sheen of rain-

washed freshness. This not
be a slum.

But it was.

The endless crush of winter had departed, and in its place
the false hope of spring. the people living in these tenement
brick did seem brighter in sunshine than it did beneath a
leadens sky knew that hope was the thing with feathers, as
rare as happiness. This stretch of 87th Precinct territory
exclusively black. And here, despite the illusion of spring
indeed grinding poverty, and illiteracy, and drug addiction
malnutrition and desperation. The black man in America knew
at. And where it was at was not here, not in these mean streets
it was at was uptown someplace, so far uptown that the blacks
never been there, could not even visualize it there, knew
uptown was a shining city somewhere high on a hill, a place
where everyone went to Choate and Yale and a thousand points
glistened in every cereal bowl.

Read my lips, Carella thought.

Nathan Hooper lived in a tenement two blocks south of The

At eight-

thirty that Saturday morning, Carella found him asleep in
back bedroom he shared with his older brother and his thirteen
year-old
sister.

Hooper was sixteen. The brother, dressed and out of the house
was eighteen. The sister was wearing a white cotton slip.
wearing white Jockey undershorts and a white tank top under
annoyed that his mother had let the police in while he was
He told his sister to cover up, couldn't she see there was
here? The sister shrugged into a robe and per's mother was
morning coffee. She had already told Carella that she had
at nine; on Saturdays and Sundays, she cleaned offices downtown.
the week, she cleaned white people's houses uptown.

Hooper pulled on a pair of jeans and went out into the narrow
barefooted, Carella following.

The bathroom was a six-by-

eight rectan containing a sink, an ancient yellowing claw-foo bathtub with a jerry-built shower over it, and incessantly gurgling toilet bowl. A plastic was drawn half closed over the tub. The of the curtain rod was hung with bikini t Ho in, and closed the door behind Standing in the hallway, C hear him urinating and then washing at the sink. When doc Hooper was drying his hands a peach-colored towel.

Wordlessly, scowling, he went back into bedroom again, Ca following him. opened the middle drawer of the only dress took out a black T-shirt, and pulled it on his head. He sat on the edge of the bed, pulled pair of white socks, and laced up a pa high-topped sneakers. He was wearing his hair what was called Fade, currently the ra among young black men in this city a fez sitting on top of the head, with lower oart of the almost clean, and Ir required very little maintenance oth occasional bit of topiary. Hooper passed a pick comb thro walked out into the kitchen, still wordlessly, still scow still patiently following. Hooper's sister was sitting at mug of coffee between her hands. She was staring through kitchen window at the clothes flapping on the backyard li them in fascination, as if they were brightly colored bir

Hooper's mother was just about to leave. She was a woman Carella guessed. Actually, he was high by about ten years

"Offer the man some coffee," she said, and went out.

"You want some coffee?" Hooper asked grudgingly.

"I could use some," Carella said.

"You always come see people in the middle of the night?" asked.

"Sorry I got here so early," Carella said, and smiled.

The girl did not smile back. Hooper was rummaging in the the drainboard, searching for clean cups. He made a great exasperation, finally banged two cups down on the counter

miraculously unscathed, and poured them three-quarters full. A container of milk was on the table. He poured from it into his own, shoved it across to where Carella had taken the chair along with the girl's.

"Sugar?" the girl said, and offered Carella the bowl.

"Thanks," Carella said. "What's your name?" "Why?" she said.

"Why not?" he said, and smiled.

"Seronia," she said.

"Nice to meet you."

"When you gonna lock up the shits beat up Nate?" she said.

"That's what I'd like to talk about," Carella said.

"Be the first one since it happened," Seronia said, and smiled.

"That's not entirely true, is it?" Carella said. "The way you put it about it was from a report in our files. So someone had told me."

"Yeah, the blues," Hooper said. "But wasn't no detectives there later is whut she means."

"Well, here's a detective now," Carella said.

"You don't look like no detective I ever seen," Seronia said. "You showed her a bad but, man, you don't look like no detective."

"What do detectives look like?" he asked.

"Like pieces a shit," she said.

Carella wasn't looking for an argument here. Was he even looking for a girl was trying to provoke one. He was here for information. The boy who had been murdered. A priest who'd protected this boy on the way out.

"According to the report..."

"The report's full of shit," Hooper said. "The only thing that's true is"

do was get out of that church fast, before they got lynched scarer than I was. You never seen two cops writing so fast.

"They didn't even drive him to the hospital," Seronia said. "I like you shoulda seen him, man. Was the priest finely too 'mergency room."

"Where was this?"

"Greer General."

"And you say Father Michael drove you there?"

"Walked me there, man," Hooper said. "You know like Chris the fuckin' cross on his back and everybody jeerin' him, was me, man. I'm bleedin' from the head from where one of me with a ball bat..."

"Start from the beginning," Carella said.

"What's the use?" Hooper said.

"What can you lose?" Seronia said, and shrugged again.

Easter this year had fallen on the fifteenth day of April, and its death throes winter tenaciously refused to loosen its grip. The day was howlingly windy, with what appeared to be a promise of rain in the air. A sullen rolling sky hung in angry motion over the city, giving it the look of an El Greco painting even in neighborhoods that were predominantly Hispanic. In this checkerboard precinct where black and white squares in the blink of an eye, Nathan Hooper lived in a neighborhood that was ninety-percent black, eight-percent Hispanic, and two-percent Asian. Not two blocks away was an entirely white neighborhood of Italian, Irish, and a sprinkling of Jews. The melting pot that was supposed to never really come to a boil. On windy Easter Sunday, it was at a rolling overboil.

Hooper rarely goes to church, but today he went into a friend's house to see Harold Jones, who other guys all call Fat Harold after their daily routine. Fat Harold isn't truly fat; he is, in fact, thin and spindly-looking. He is also a crack who is on his way to church to pray that he can kick his habit and become a better man.

black television star like Bill Cosby. decides to go along with it. fuckin' cold windy to hang out, might as well join Fat Harold.

The church they go to is on the corner of Second and Third, and it's the First Baptist Abyssinian Church of Isola. Hooper is glad to go to church, because as far as he's concerned the rest of it is irrelevant. He's dropped out of school because he doesn't do good real good. His teachers ever realized he was dyslexic but one thing is for sure, all those history books he stru through was that most of the people ever on this planet was because one religion tried to and another. And it was the only true way to God. what the preacher is layin' out in church this morning all this stuff about Jesus crucified for the Jews or whoever fuck did it, Hooper doesn't know and he doesn't care. a damn is all a lot of bullshit to him. These people want to hear fairy tales about virgins getting pregnant without nobody's help. that was their business. All Hooper was doing here was gettin' out.

They're out of church by a little past noon. Fat Harold goes to this crack house he knows, buy himself a nickel vial, pass it around, smoking some dope. But Hooper tells him what's the sense in goin' to church and prayed his ass off for salvation if the next morning he's on the pipe, does that make sense, man? He tells Fat Harold to use the five bucks they go see a movie and buy some popcorn. Hooper thinks he rather go smoke some dope. So they part company. It's this is now maybe ten past twelve, a quarter past and Fat Harold goes on his way to the crack house where he's gonna find hope in a pipe. and Hooper walks crosstown and a little ways uptown on Third Street. this movie theater is playing a new picture with Eddie Murphy.

Uptown.

Is where this movie theater is.

Uptown.

Where Eddie Murphy and Bill Cosby live.

Hooper knows he is walking into white turf, he • wasn't born here. But, man, this is Easter Sunday and all he's doing is goin' to a movie where there's hundreds of white people standing on the sidewalk waitin' to see a black man up there on the screen. Handful of people in the line, too, here and there, guys all silked up, sportin' fancy cars, girls, this is Easter Sunday, it'll be cool, man, no sweat.

Hooper wishes he had a girl with him, too. But he broke u
chick last month 'cause she was mad he dropped out of sch
for the best if she didn't understand how he wasn't getti
that fuckin' school, what was the sense wastin' his time
more on a stree corner in ten minutes than you did in sch
fuckin' tenn. But on days like today, dudes all around hi
girls, he misses her. makes him feel like some kind of je
going to a movie alone.

Eddie Murphy takes care of that, though.

Eddie Murphy makes him feel good.

You see a handsome black man up there, hell and not takin
Whitey, it you feel real good. Eddie Murphy probably live
on a hill overlooking the ocean. Probably had blonde girl
suck his cock and his feet with they hair like the preach
Jesus's feet this morning. You was Eddie, Murphy, you cou
in the world you". wanted, have anything you wanted. Didn
was black. You was Eddie Murphy, man! In movie theater, s
the dark with mostly white people, Hooper likes to wet hi
laughing every time Eddie Murphy does another one of his
White people all around him are laughing, too. Not at any
but at dumb Charlie who the nigger's fuckin' around. Hoop
completely understand why all these white people are laug
ownelves, but he knows it makes him feel damn good.

He is still feeling good when he comes out of the theater
thirty,
around then. It isn't snowing yet, but it sure feels like
start any minute.

Still windy as can be, great big gusts blowin' in off the
cuttin' clear to the marrow. He can walk home one of two
down on The Stem to North Fifth, and then come crosstown
blocks to his own building on Culver, where maybe some of
hangin' out, or he can go directly crosstown on Eleventh
theater is, and then walk downtown on Culver, six of one,
of the other except that the Eleventh Street route will t
straight through an exclusively Italian neighborhood.

Hooper does not belong to any of the neighborhood street
does he do dope nor run dope for any of the myriad crack
what the newspapers call "a blight on the urban landscape

good student, but this does not make him a bad person. The skin does not make him a bad person, either. He is black.

I-
He knows he is black. But he has never done a criminal thing in his life. Never. (He repeats the Word fervently to Carella no matter how often. This is no small achievement in a neighborhood where the Word is often used with pride. I'm a baaaaad nigger, man. If Hooper does any kind of nigger, it's gonna be a good one. Like Eddie. Eddie tells this to Carella, too, driving the point home by rapping the fist on his T-shined chest.)

The Italian-Americans on Eleventh Street are so far removed in time, space and attitude from their heritage in Naples or Palermo that they could, if they chose to, safely drop the hyphenated form. They are Americans, period, born and bred on the turf they now inhabit with a somewhat confused and confusing ethnic pride. These are great-great-grandparents came here as immigrants at the turn of the last century. Kids whose great-grandparents were first-generation Americans.

Kids whose grandparents fought against Italy in World War I. Their parents were teenagers in the Sixties, and who themselves were teenagers who do not speak Italian and who do not care to learn. They are Americans. And it is American to cherish home, it is American to protect one's neighborhood from evil infiltration, it is American to cherish God and country and to make sure no niggers fuck their sisters.

Hooper is aware of them at once.

He has come perhaps a block and a half crosstown: from Thirteenth Street. He sees them on the front of the building. There are six of them. It is Easter Sunday and they are all silked out in their new Easter suits, hanging out and kidding around, laughing.

He tells himself that's all they're doing is hanging out and kidding around, laughing, but warning hackles go up on the back of his neck anyway. He should not be here. He should have gone down Thirteenth Street to Fifth Street instead, he was dumb to come across Eleventh Street. All of a sudden the horseplay stops and the laughter stops. A dead silence, they have spotted him.

He figures he should cross the street.

Would Eddie Murphy cross the street?

Sheee-

it, man, no! Hooper's got as much right as these dudes to wherever the fuck he wants to be, man but his heart is pounding. He knows there is going to be trouble. He can smell it on the wind, feel it coming his way on the wind, blowin' on the wind, his black skin like somebody usin' a cattle prod on him.. danger.., run!

But would Eddie Murphy run?

He does not run.

He does not cross the street.

He keeps walking toward where the six of them have now cooed and stooped and are standing on the sidewalk in a casual phalanx, their arms dangling loosely at their sides like gunslicks about to cock. They all smile on their faces, say somethin' smart, he thinks, say something cool, be Eddie Murphy, man! But nothing smart comes. Nothing.

He smiles.

"Hey, man," he says to the closest one.

And the baseball bat comes swinging out nowhere.

"Do you know which one used the bat?" asked.

"No," Hooper said.

"They all had bats," Seronia said.

"That was later," Hooper said. "When they chasin' me. All of 'em all got bats. Or can lids. It was that first bat bust my head. 'Cause it took me by surprise. It musta been one them stunts. The first back had the bat hid, you know' So when I come up, I'm like, 'Oh, fuck, duck, know? I give 'em my shit-eatin' grin, I say man' politely, and wham the bat comes somewhere hid behind them, breaks my head."

"What happened then?"

"I ran, man, whutchoo think happen? They six them who all ball bats, and they nigger and whatnot, man I know a lyncher one. I got the hell out of there fast as my could carry me. It wasn't gonna be the end it, far as they was concerned. They told me, all six of 'em, cussin' and yellin' and chasin' off to the street, figured once I got to Culver I be I could run downtown on the hell Eleventh Street..."

"You was crazy goin' in there in the first place," Seroni said.

"It was Easter," Hooper said in explanation, and shrugged.

"All right, they're chasing you," Carella said.

"Yeah, and I'm thinkin' I gotta get off the street, I stay on the street, they goan kill me. I gotta be someplace where there's a restaurant, a bar, anythin' where they people can see what's goin' on, if it goes that far. 'Cause it sounds like it's goan all right, but it sounds like they out to kill me."

"Then what?"

"All at once, I see this church up ahead. I never been in that church in my life, but there it is, and I figure there's got to be people in that church, don't there, this is Easter Sunday. I like was looking for a long time by then, I didn't realize there wouldn't be no service at three thirty, three o'clock, whatever it was by then.

But the front door was open... "Standing open?"

"No, no. Unlocked. I tried it and it was unlocked.

They were right behind me, man, it's a good thing it wasn't later, I be dead right there on the church steps. So I ran in with the door open and drippin' blood and them behind me yellin' and I hear yellin' from someplace in the church, and the first thing I know they got me surrounded, man, there's yellin' behind me and in front of me, I'm a dead man."

"What do you mean, yelling in front of you?"

"From like behind these columns. Two people el "

Y hng.

"Behind what columns?"

"Where they on the right side of the church, know? They's columns and what I must be a little room back there 'caus

"Is that where the yelling was coming from? little room b columns? On the ri side of the church?"

"I'm only sayin' it was a room, I was never in

But this door opened, and a priest came out..."

"From the room?"

"From whatever was there behind the door. heard all the y church, you see. them yellin' nigger and they was goan ki and heard me yellin' Help, somebody help So he came out I surprised and scared and thing he sees is me spillin' blo head, he goes, "What's this, what's this?" like he believ here's a nigger bleedin' on floor and six white guys chas yell, man, hep me, they goan kill me!' and the priest wha now, gets it all in a flash, man, steps between me and th them get luck outa his church, tells them this is God's h all that shit. Meanwhile called the cops, and by the time was a big crowd outside, everybody yellin' screamin' ever know what the was happenin'. It was the priest walked me The cops were too scared. If you're write up a report..."

"I am."

"You better mention them fucks was too scared to put me i drive me the six blocks to Greer. I had to walk it with t

"I'll mention it," Carella said.

A lot of good it'll do, he thought. The police protected was a simple, perhaps regrettable fact. But he would ment

"You say the priest was arguing with someone when you cam

"Yeah."

"Who, do you know?"

"No. It was behind the door there."

"A man? A woman?"

"A man, I think. There were six fuckin guys tryin'a kill
gave a shit who..."

"How do you know they were arguing?" "'Cause they were ye
other."

"Did you hear anything they said?"

"Just these loud voices."

"Two voices? Or more than two?"

"I don't know."

"Well... after it was all over.., did you see anyone?"

"What do you mean?"

"Coming out of that room."

"Oh. No. We went straight to the hospital. The cops opened
the crowd out there, and me and the priest went through.
nobody else inside the church."

"You know Father Michael was killed Thursday night, don't
Hooper said. "And I know who done TOO."

Carella looked at him.

"Them wops," Hooper said. "They made a vow they gonna get
the priest. For happened on Easter. So now they got the p
means I'm next. And for what? For walkin'

the street mindin' myown fuckin' business." "For being' b
said.

Carella had no argument.

"It was very nice of you to come up here, Lund," Hawes said. "It's Saturday, and I to intrude on your time." "Not at all. Happy to help in any I can."

The clock on the wall read twenty minutes eleven. Krissie wore blue jeans, boots, a white T-shirt, and a fringed leather vest. makeup except lipstick and eye linei'. Long hair pulled to the back in a ponytail. smelled of spring flowers.

"As I told you on the phone, the lab sent over whole batches and bills and whatnot, Father Michael's stuff, you know, finished going through. The point is, the lab some very good people, them, and we..."

"Latents?"

"Father Michael's, of course, but also some wild prints that have been left by the killer. In case he'd been in the office and looked at the files for something, which is still a possibility because he'd open the file drawer and the papers on the floor. Okay, so far so good," Krissie said, and smiled.

"So what we're trying to do is track down the wild prints that we know for sure weren't left by Father Michael and eliminate the ones that have had a legitimate reason to be handling the papers. Completely logical..." "Yes, his secretary," Krissie said, and smiled.

"Yes, would be a logical choice. Typing them, filing them..."

"Yes."

"You look very pretty this morning," he said.

The words startled her. They startled him, too. He hadn't meant to say them out loud. A second earlier, he'd only been thinking them.

"Well, thank you," Krissie said.

"Sorry," he said.

"No, no."

"But you do."

"Well, thanks."

There was an awkward silence. They stood side by side in a shaft of sunlight streaming through the window. The squadroom was silent this morning. Somewhere down the hall, a telephone rang. Outside the street, a horn honked.

"The thing is," he said, and cleared his throat, "the killing of any of the papers ... and chance are he at least had his stuff he threw over the floor then by eliminating as many as we can, we might have a shot at identification later on. If we

Which so far we haven't. But if we do."

"Yes." "Which is why I asked you to stop by to have prints made. It's no bother." "No bother at all," she said.

"It'll take ten, fifteen minutes at the most."

"I've always wondered what it'd be like to have my fingerprints taken."

"Really? Well, here's your chance to find out." "Yes," she said.

"Yes," he said, and cleared his throat again.

"Are you catching a cold?" she asked.

"No, I don't think so."

"Because you keep clearing your throat, know..."

"No, that's..."

"So I thought maybe..."

"No, that's a nervous reaction," Hawes said.

"Oh," she said.

"Yes."

"Oh."

They looked at each other.

"Well, how do we do this?" she asked.

"Well... if you'll step over to this table..."

"Just like in the movies, huh?"

"Sort of."

"I've never had my fingerprints taken before," she said.

"Yes, I know."

"Did I tell you?"

"Yes." "Oh. Then it must be true," she said.

"Yes."

"The first thing I have to do," he said, "is lock my pistol drawer there because what happened once I don't know how was --

a police officer somewhere in the city was fingerprinting and the guy grabbed the gun and shot him dead." "Oh my!"

"Yeah," Hawes said. "So now it's a rule that whenever we fingerprint anyone, we have to take off the gun."

He walked over to his desk, dropped his pistol into one of the drawers on the right-

hand side, locked the drawer, and then came back to the fingerprinting table. Krissie watched apprehensively as he squirted black ink from a tube onto a pane of glass.

"This stuff washes right off with soap and water," he said.

"Thank God," she said.

"Oh sure, nothing to worry about."

"You must be an expert at this," she said.

"Well, it becomes second nature. Although we rarely do it is all done at Central Booking now. Downtown. At Headquarters and printing," she said. "Is that what you call it?"

"Yes."

"Mugging and printing," she said again.

"Yes." He was rolling the ink onto the glass now spreading. She watched him with interest.

"You have to spread it, huh?" she said.

"Yes."

"Like blackberry jam," she said.

"I never thought of it that way," he said, and down the rack we go. Now I'll just take of these cards..."

He took a fingerprint card from the rack at back of the table.

"And if you'll let me have your right first..."

She extended her hand to him.

"I have to... uh... sort of... uh... if you'll just your finger of... uh... Loose... I have to them on the glass first, your finger..."

"I hope this stuff really washes off," she said.

"Oh, yes, with soap and water, I promise. that's better."

She was sort of standing with her right hip sort against his arms sort of cradling her arm, sort of holding her hands as he rolled her fingers one at a time on the glass. He rolled them in turn on the fingerprint card... "Now the t

"Am I doing this right?" she asked.

"Just let me do it," he said, "just relax, that's the "

way... ... sort of standing very close to each other in the
sunwashed squadroom, he could smell the scent of her flow
"Now the other hand," he said.

... sort of guiding each finger onto the glass, rolling it
lifting it, rolling it onto the card, sort of moving together
special rhythm now, her

hand in his, her hip sort of molded in against him... "That's
fun," she said.

"Yes," he said, "can you have dinner with me tonight?" "I'd like
she said.

She'd finally chosen the Walther PPK, a neat little .32 caliber
automatic with an eight-shot capacity.

Shad Russell had showed her some guns that had five, six, or seven
shot
capacities, but she figured if push came to shove she might need
few extra cartridges.

Seven in the magazine, he'd told her, another in the breech.
showed her some .22 caliber pistols, but she insisted on more
firepower.

Shad told her the caliber didn't mean a thing. You could do
more damage with a .22 than with a .45. She didn't believe in
bring down a giant, you didn't go after him with pea shooter.

She wasn't even sure this gun would do the job, But all the
caliber guns seemed either too bulky or too heavy. The Walther
three-

inch barrel, with an overall length of only an inch and a half in
the lightweight model chose weighed only a bit more than a pound
fit snugly in her handbag, alongside of and very much bulkier than
wallet. Shad charged her six hundred dollars for the gun. His
his profit on this deal alone would pay for a vacation at Lake Tahoe.

She had discovered that a person did not "shoot" when she was
unlicensed pistol. suspected that not many such gun-
toters the speed
limit, either. Or spit on the sidewalk. even raised their

public places. She breaking the law. And would break it if she had to. Break it to the limit if she had to. Her bag heavier than the law. The weight reassuring.

She had spent this Saturday morning shopping" the midtown station. She boarded a uptown-bound, graffiti-covered subway train twenty past two.

She was not in the habit of expensive taxi rides all over the city. Now she did plan on changing her habits now. Moreover, she seemed to find safety in crowded places; they had spooked yesterday's incident led them directly to a cop.

The train rattled along in the underground dark.

Marilyn wondered if there were such things as passionate, wild-eyed men who looked like lions and made their homes in subway caves. She wondered if there were alligators in the city's sewers. She wondered if there was such a thing as happily ever after.

The train pulled into a station stop.

The doors hissed open.

She watched the passengers coming on. She did not expect to see two remotely resembling her two Hispanics to board. The doors opened again. The train was in motion.

It was two-thirty-five when she got off the train uptown on The Stem and began walking northward toward the river. She was certain that the man where she lived, had undoubtedly followed her from there. As she approached Silvermine Oval now, her eyes swept both ways down the street ahead. Her handbag was slung on her left shoulder.

Her fight hand rested on its open top, hovering over the car. Walther.

Nothing.

She kept walking.

Entered the Oval, came around it. Nanny pushing a baby carriage into the bright sunshine. Such a lovely day. The weight of the gun in her hand. Around Oval and onto Harborside. The small park across the street.

house. Potential danger there. A approaching on the park street. Short wearing a tan sports jacket. Little mustach nose. Charlie Chaplin lookalike. Went on by, in his own t scanned the park entrance Nothing.

1211 Harborside was just ahead, on her left. one on either street, not a sign of in the park. A pigeon fluttered over the park fence, settled on the walk inside the gate She the building and fished into her for her keys, the back of brushing against the Walther. Found the keys, unlocked the door, came into the entryway, secured the locks behind her wearing Chanel ripoff, blue skirt and blue jacket with a Unbuttoning the jacket, she went to answering machine, saw had messages, and pressed the playback button.

"Honey, it's me."

Willis's voice.

"Did you make dinner reservations for toni Because I didn't Saturday night, and have a hell of a time this late. I know Italian, don't you? Do you think you could Mangia Bene? I I should be around four-thirty, see you then, love ya."

She looked at her watch.

Ten minutes to three.

"Hello, Miss. Willis, this is Sylvia Bourne, I'm the real you were talking to Thursday night, at the open house? Oh The co-op? I wonder if you and Mr. Hollis have had a chance to talk about that penthouse apartment? I'm sure the sponsor would bid lower than the three-fifty, if you'd care to make an offer. Let me know what you think, won't you? It's negotiable. I know I card, but here's the number again."

As she reeled off the number twice, no less Marilyn wondered could ever get their names straight. It would be worth getting

just so they'd have only one name to worry about.

"Hello, Marilyn?"

A woman's voice.

"It's Eileen."

Eileen?

"Burke. If you've got a minute, can you give me a call? A few things I'd like to discuss with you. Here's the number."

Marilyn listened to the number, writing, thinking this had to be telepathy. Yesterday she'd thought of calling Eileen about it, but today Eileen was calling her. The difference was that today she had a gun. And she still wasn't sure Eileen liked her very much. Should I call me? And, Conversely, do I like her enough to call her?

First things first, she thought.

Mangia Bene.

She found the number in her personal diary, dialed it, said hello, calling for Detective Willis why not a little P.D. muscle? It was late night? and asked if they could take two of them at eight o'clock. Unconsciously, she looked at her watch again. Three o'clock. She was home in an hour and a half. She waited while the man read his newspaper, clucking his tongue all while. Finally, he said, "Sergeant Willis, two you at eight, we look forward to seeing you tomorrow again."

She cradled the phone, debated calling right that minute, but then, with, decided she rather bathe first. Slinging her shoulder bag upstairs to the third floor of the house.

They were waiting for her in the bedroom.

She went for the gun.

She went for it at once, not a moment's hesitation, right to her body and dipping into the open mouth of the bag, fingers around the grip, gun coming up and out of the bag, forefinger on trigger guard, thumb snapping off the safety, gun leveling.

He was on her in an instant.

The big one.

Moving swiftly across the Persian rug on the parqueted floor, she reached the canopyed bed and the love seat upholstered in royal-blue crushed velvet.

He was an experienced street fighter, he did not grab for the gun. The gun was where the danger was. He came up on her left side, ducking inside the gun hand and throwing his shoulder against her before she could pull off a shot. She stumbled backward. He hit her in the face, his huge fist bunched. She felt immediate pain. She put her left hand up at once, forgetting the gun, the shriek of pain in her nose, pulling her hand away. It was covered with blood. He took her hand as if taking a toy from a naughty child. She heard his breath. The pain was blood poured onto her hand, blood dripped through her fingers, blood stained her blouse and the front of her jacket. Blood splattered onto the Persian rug, wondered abruptly if the blood would come out, pain, where was the gun?

He was grinning.

Big fucking gorilla standing there grinning she held back the blood that bubbled into throat, the small gun in his huge hand, the blood on the Empire State Building airplanes.

"No more of that," he said in Spanish, grinning. The other handsome one, was into the bathroom. She kept her eyes on the ugly one who had hurt her. He did not know there also a switch in her bag. She would hit his throat the moment she had a chance. She came out of the bathroom.

"Here," he said in Spanish and handed her one of her good bags. White. With the initials monogrammed on it in curled red. Like royalty. Gold on white. She did not want to stain good things. She was bleeding all over the She put the towel to her nose.

"Noses bleed a lot," the ugly one said in Spanish, • as if it was a comment on the weather.

The other one merely nodded.

"Do you have a license for this gun?" the ugly one said and she laughed.

She said nothing.

Held the towel to her nose, trying to stop the flow of blood. She did for the pain. The pain shrieked and shrieked. She kept her mouth clenched to keep from screaming. She would not scream. She would not reveal her terror. She would wait for the proper moment, when he held the knife. Cut him.

Hurt him the way he had hurt her. And then go after the other, the handsome one.

"Answer him," he said.

In Spanish. They were both speaking Spanish, assuming she was, recognizing that if she was in fact Mary Ann Hollis, then she could speak Spanish, she had learned Spanish in that fucking Mexico and had polished it on her knees in Buenos Aires. She pretended to understand.

Stupidity, she realized. The initials MH were on every towel in the bathroom.

"Did you hear me?" the handsome one said.

"Answer him!" "I don't understand you," she said in English.

"She doesn't understand us," he said in Spanish, • "so keep your fucking teeth."

The big one moved toward her, turning the gun up in his hand, holding it so that the butt was in position. He was grinning again.

"No," she said.

"No what?" the handsome one said.

In Spanish.

"No, don't hit me," she said.

In English.

"I don't understand you," he said in Spanish.

"No me pegues, por favor," she said.

"Muy bien," the handsome one said. "Now will speak only Spanish, do you comprehend?"

"St;" she said, "solo español."

Until I go for the knife, she thought.

"Do you know why we're here?" he asked.

"No."

"Do you know who we are?"

"No."

"My name is Ramon Castaneda. My colleague Carlos Ortega."

She nodded.

"Do you think it foolhardy of us? Telling you names?" She asked.

"We trust you not to tell anyone after gone," Ramon said.

"Or we'll come back to kill you," Carlos said, grinned.

The gun was no longer in his hand. Had he in his pocket? She had been paying attention, but she'd been too fucking intent on the lesson, too afraid the big one, Carlos, would really use his teeth. She had let them frighten her. They had won the first battle, not even a battle, a tiny skirmish, frightening her by revealing that she spoke Spanish fluently. But they'd known that already. Just as they knew she was Marilyn Hollis. Or, more accurately, Mary Ann Hollis. On the street yesterday, they had called her Marianna and then Mariucha. They knew her as Mary Ann Hollis, the case she could claim... "What do you...?" she started in Spanish, immediately switched to Spanish. "What do you want here?"

"The money," Ramon said.

Straight to the point, she thought.

"What money?"

"The money you stole from Alberto Hidalgo," Carlos said.

Even more directly to the point.

"Four hundred million Argentine australes," Ramon said.

"Two million dollars American," Carlos said.

"We want it back."

A pair of international bankers discussing high finance in

"I don't know what you're talking about," she said.

Still speaking Spanish. This was a cozy little gathering among his
born

Spanish-

speaking people. was a tea party on the duchess's lawn. The
duchess had invited the two bankers here to meet dazzling
traveler, Mary Ann Holli.. whose nose was still bleeding
towel.

"You must be mistaking me for someone else she said in Spanish.

Everyone speaking Spanish. How nice to have second language

"No, there's no mistake," Ramon said.

"We know who you are, and we know you the money," Carlos

"And we'll kill you if you don't give it back us," Ramon
slight shrug of his shoulders, this was merely one of the
international banking.

"Marilyn Hollis?" she said. "Are you looking someone named
Hollis?"

"No, we're..."

"Because that's my name, you see, and..."

"Shut up," the ugly one said.

Very softly.

The word sounding not at all menacing Spanish, cdllate, t
mellifluously his tongue, cdllate, shut up.

"Your name is Mary Ann Hollis," he said. softly. Explained
a very young possibly quite stupid child.

"Ah, bien," she said, "there's the mis..."

"No," he said.

The word identical in English and in Spanish.

No.

Softly.

No, we've made no mistake. You are Mary Ann I-
Iollis. And we are going
to kill you if you don't give us the money you stole from

All in that single word.

No.

The bag was still on her shoulder.

The knife was in the bag.

The clock on the mantel read 3:15.

I should be home around four-
thirty, see you then, love ya.

No sense wishing for the cavalry. Do or die. Go for the k
clock ticked into the room. Her nose had stopped bleeding
the towel aside, seeing her own reflection in the ornatel
opposite the bed, her reverse image partially obscured by
the two gentlemen from Buenos Aires.

"I have identification," she said. "My driver "s license.

The one to go for was the big one.. "... my credit cards.

Him first.

"We don't need identification," the handsome one said. Ramon said, "I know exactly who you are."

"But that's just it, you see..."

Moving across the room toward where the big one with his hands was at his sides.

"If I can prove that I'm not who you think I am..."

Her hand dropping into the bag as she moved.

"... then you'll realize your mistake, and you'll..."

"There is no mistake," Ramon said, shaking head.

Fingers searching for the knife.

"But there is. Look, I'd be happy to pay back..." "Then pay me back now!" Ramon said.

Fingers closing on the handle of the knife.

"... but I'm just not this person you think I am. mean it."

"Enough of this shit!" Carlos said.

Verdad, she thought, and yanked the knife out the bag.

Her mistake was going high.

She should have gone low instead, for the plunge the blade made across his belly, hands would have had to cross in front of him to block the thrust, a clumsy unnatural maneuver. Instead she went for his throat. Arm stiff extended, right hand clutching the handle, the blade going for his throat like a matador's sword, that was the mistake. Because his hands were up at once in a fighter's instinctive defense, he clenched for the tick of an instant, and then hands opening he recognized in an instant's beat exactly what was happening to him with a knife, this was a here!

His eyes said Oh, yeah?

Ah sf?

In which case I will break your fucking face.

She saw those eyes at once, read those eyes, had seen the those eyes many times before when she'd been repeatedly b in that Mexican prison, and she thought No, mister, never stopped the knife in mid-thrust because his hands were there and she did not want those massive fingers closing on her wrist.

She shifted her stance, stood wide-legged and fierce, the knife moving in tiny circles, waiting for his move. He was not going f his pocket or wherever the hell he'd put it. This meant t respected the knife. You didn't grow up a fucking hoodlum without having been cut at least once. You didn't spend t Mexican prison, either, without becoming an expert on rea

The big one's eyes were saying that she was the one with he did not want to get cut. Her eyes were saying If you m the gun, I'll

go for your eyes. I'll blind you. Mexican standoff.

She'd forgotten the handsome one.

He moved in as gracefully and as swiftly as a flamenco da caught his motion almost a moment too late, spotted him f her eye, and turned immediately to her right as he lunged thought again, No, mister, and swung the knife out in a w arc, backhanded. He put out his hand as if trying to defl and then started to pull it back when he remembered cold but he was too late. caught him. It ripped through the me of his hand, just below the pinky, horizontally, opening gash. He "Aiiiii," and caught the hand in his free hand, c it, trying to cradle it, pulling in against his body, his pale, glazing over in fear, the blood covering now'm she again.

And cut him again.

Slashed out viciously at both hands where they were in tight a
belly, the blade across the knuckles of the left hand, sl
bone. He began whimpering. His running. He stood there wi
his nose running, his hands bleeding, baby. She had them
line of " the handsome one backing away toward the whimpe
still nowhere in sl wondered why the big one didn't pull
realized in a sudden exhilarating they could not kill her
killed her, never get the money they'd come for. In they
did not kill except as an example to other debtors. If yo
you threatened and you they could hurt her very badly --
but you Not if
you wanted your money. They her!

felt suddenly invincible.

"Come on," she said.

swinging out ahead of her.

on, you cocksuckers!"

Spanish, so they'd know exactly what she was fe testing t

want it? Come get it! Come on/" handsome one was still wh

kept his hands tucked in against his belly. His was cover

big one's eyes had naked murder in them. almost burst out
wanted to kill he couldn't. Anger twisted his features, c
to quiver. His fury was ., a towering rage that set him t
volcano about to erupt. His face was livid, clenched, mov
eyes blazing.

come on," she said.

he would come.

wishing he would come.

you, she thought.

out your eyes.

i backed away from her instead, guiding the one around he

never leaving the cautiously back and away from her, her bedroom door, Marilyn that the knife was always between them. The handsome one could not stop whimpering. At the door, whis, "Volverernos."

Which meant "We'll be back."

Nobody on Eleventh Street knew anything what had happened Sunday. This me that everybody in the neighborhood knew what happened. But around here, there was need to talk to cops, if somebody was you, you went to people who could do about it. The thing cops could do was parking tickets and sit around with their asses.

Around here, they told a story about these black guys went to Grot one night. was a restaurant on Ainsley, it was actually Capri, but everybody called it the Grot, even the guys who these guys walk in on a crowded Friday night, they're strapping guns like .45s or Magnums, depended on who was telling them, they shove the guns in the cashier's face and announce this is my man, and the he just stands there with his arms folded and shaking his head. Like he can't believe happening, man! Every fucking walking into a place has Mafia written up on one and the other, they're here pulling a Amazing! So they clean out the register and

off in the night, and the headwaiter is still there shaking his head in the wonder of it all.

Next day one of the niggers comes back to the restaurant with a sling, and his right eye is half-closed and there's a bandage wrapped around his head from where somebody busted it for him.

He's carrying a briefcase. He asks to see the owner and tells him some friends of his made a terrible mistake last night here the way they done, and like, man, here's all the money, let bygones be bygones, man, keep the briefcase, too, it's

People around here still laughed at that story.

Which is why nobody around here went to the cops when they had a problem that needed solving. They went instead to the people who knew what to do about it. Which is why on any given Friday night

customers at the Capri Grot could park their Benzes or the cars outside and nobody would even dream of touching them. And what happened to be double-parked in a clearly marked No Parking zone, that was okay, too, because some of the cops on the beat here were the pockets of the people you went to whenever you had a problem. This is why you didn't tell cops a fucking thing around here, because if they asked you was your mother a virgin before she got married, they would know.

Nobody on the street knew who had busted that nigger's head on Sunday.

Nobody on the street even knew there'd been trouble at all.

Except Angelo Di Napoli.

Di Napoli was thirty-seven years old, a cop family name (which translated as "of Naples" promised short and dark with curly hair) who was in fact an even six feet tall with blond and blue eyes. Di Napoli was a recent transfer to Eight-Seven from the CPEP Unit at the Riverhead Five-

One Riverhead. CPEP was an acronym for £ Police Enrichment Program, a law concept rudely imitative of the foot-patrol program in several other large American cities. Here in city, the centralized 911 response system had gone into effect some thirty years ago, based on the need for quick motorized response, leaving in its wake a reduction in the number of foot patrols. Then, as so often happened when a change was confused with quality, many police began thinking that motorized patrol was in a more diverse and interesting assignment, with a greater chance that those poor souls assigned to foot beat approached their assignment with enthusiasm. All by way of saying that the officer who had been entirely eliminated in the scheme of law enforcement and crime prevention.

CPEP pronounced Cee-Pep by the department had been designed to correct what was now perceived as an error. Its sole intent was to re-establish the foot-patrol cop as an essential part of the process of essential communication between police and community. Di Napoli had been a part of

effective Narcopoc Drive, a combined blues-and-suits operation aimed at narcotic pockets in the Fifty-First precinct and resulting in a total of some ten thousand buy-and-bust arrests. It was a measure of the man that he considered it a challenge to be transferred to the new CPEP Unit at the Eight-Seven, under the command of a sergeant who'd initiated Operation Clean Sweep out of the notorious Hundo and-First in Majesta. Di Napoli was a good cop and a dedicated cop. cop, he listened. And like any dedicated cop, he put what good use.

He would not have known that Carella was on the job if Carella introduced himself. Di Napoli couldn't recall seeing him at the station house, but then again he was new here. They exchanged pleasantries... "How's it going?"

"Little quiet."

"Well, give it time, it's Saturday."

"Yeah, I can't wait."

... and then Carella got straight to the point.

"I'm investigating the murder of that priest at St. Kate's."

"Yeah, Thursday night," Di Napoli said.

"That's the one. I'm looking for whoever chased a black man out of church on Easter Sunday." "I wasn't here then," Di Napoli said. "I got transferred the first of the month." He hesitated then. "The Edward-car panicked, huh?"

"Let's say they got out of there fast."

"The people around here laugh about it."

"I'll bet." "Bad for the old image, huh?" Di Napoli said, raising his eyebrows. "I bust my ass out here day night and two jerks get hot."

"Have you heard anything about who it have been?"

"That jumped the black kid?"

"Yeah."

"I'll tell you," Di Napoli said, "there's a happening around here, they're starting to be proud of it, you know what I mean? These nigger people. They like the idea these cops beat up the black kid and get away with it. That cops cooled it, you know? For whatever reason, maybe Edward-

the car was afraid they'd have a riot on their hands, who knows? The point is a kid got beat up, and nobody paid for it. Around here they're saying Yeah, it served him right and he should be in his own neighborhood, where he come around here, and so on, and the neighborhood, we don't need niggers coming in...!

Di Napoli shook his head.

"I'm Italian, you know," he said, "I guess you too, but I know the way Italians feel about people. It's a fuckin' shame the way they don't know how much prejudice there still is around about niggers. You know? Italians. Maybe they don't know you say somebody's supposed to be a thief or a ditchdigger or a guy singing in a restaurant with checked tablecloths and Chianti bottles on the wall. I'm only a cop, I mean I know I'm not a fuckin' accountant or a bank president, but there're Italians who are, you realize. You get these dumb wops in this neighborhood ... that's exactly what they are, excuse me, they're dumb fucking wops .. they beat up a black kid and then they laugh about it later and all Italians suffer from it. I hate it. Man, I absolutely hate it."

"You sound like you know who did it," Carella said.

"Not completely. But I've been listening, believe me."

"And what've you heard?"

"I heard a guy in his forties, he's in the construction business, his name is Vinnie Corrente, I heard he's been bragging to people that the person Bobby was the one used the bat. I didn't hear him say it personally, otherwise his ass would be up the station house right now. I'm reading him Miranda, the dumb fucking wop."

"On the other hand..."

"On the other hand, you're investigating a "Uh-huh."

"So maybe you got probable to pull him in."

"Let's say I'd like to talk to him."

"Let's say he's in apartment 41 at 304 North." "Thanks,"

"Hey, come on," Di Napoli said, pleased.

304 North Eleventh was a five-story brick set in row of identical buildings undoubtedly put up by same contractor at the turn of the century, when neighborhood was still considered desirable. At thirty that afternoon, several old wearing the black mourning dress could see on widows all over Italy were in late afternoon on the front chatting in Italian. Carella nodded good them, went through them and past into the building foyer. He found a V. Corrente in apartment 41, began climbing the steps.

The building was scrupulously clean.

Mouth-watering cooking smells wafted in hallways, suffused the stairwells. Oregano thyme. Sweet sausage. Fresh basil. Delicious simmering in olive oil and garlic.

Carella kept climbing.

He found apartment 41 to the right of the on the fourth-floor landing.

He listened at the for a moment, heard nothing, and knock

"Who is it?" a man's voice said.

"Police," Carella answered.

There was a brief silence.

"Just a minute," the man said.

Carella waited.

He heard several locks coming undone, and then the door came off three inches or so, held by a night chain.

"Let's see your badge," the man said.

Gruff nonsense voice, somewhat gravelly. A smoker's voice. Or a drinker's.

Carella flipped open his leather case to show a blue-enameled, gold detective's shield and a laminated I.D. card. "Detective," he said.

"Eighty-seventh Squad." "What's this about, Carella," the man asked. He had still not taken the chain off the door. In the narrow doorway and jamb, Carella could dimly perceive a heavyset man with stubble on his cheeks, dark hooded eyes.

"Want to open the door?" he asked.

"Not till I know what this is about," the man said.

"Are you Vincent Corrente?"

"Yeah?"

Surprise in his voice.

"I'd like to ask you a few questions, Mr. Corrente, if that's all right," Carella said.

"Like I said, what about?"

"Easter Sunday."

"What about Easter Sunday?"

"Well, I won't really know until I can ask some questions."

There was silence behind the door. In the wed Carella tho detected the eyes narrowing.

"What do you say?" he asked.

"I say tell me more," the man said.

"Mr. Corrente, I want to ask you about an" that occurred Catherine's Church on Sunday." "I don't go to church," Co

"Neither do I," Carella said. "Mr. Corrente, investigatin

There was another silence. And then, and unsurprisingly'm
"murder" some worked magic --
the night chain came off rattle, and the
door opened wide.

Corrente was wearing a pair of brown and a tank top under
jowly, unkempt man with a cigar in his mouth and a on his
come in, how nice to see the here on my doorstep, come in
don't the way the place looks, my wife's been sick, in, D
please.

Carella went in.

A modest apartment, spotlessly clean Corrente's protestat
apologies. kitchen to the right, living room dead ahead,
either side of it, presumably to bedrooms. From behind on
television set was going.

"Come on in the kitchen," Corrente said, "so we won't bot
She's got the flu, I hadda get the doctor in yesterday. Y
or anything?"

"Thanks, no," Carella said.

They went into the kitchen and sat opposite each other at
Formica-topped table. The air-
shaft window was open. In the backyard,
four stories below, Carella could hear some kids playing
a-Leevio.

From the other room, he could hear the unintelligible dro
television set.

Corrente lifted an open can of beer that was sitting on the table, took a long swallow from it, and then said, "So what's this about Catherine's?"

"You tell me."

"All I know is I heard there was some fuss there on Easter Sunday."

"That's true."

"But I don't know what."

"A black boy was badly beaten by a gang of six white boys. The boys were from..."

"There are no gangs in this neighborhood," Corrente said.

"Anything more than two in number, we call a gang," Carella said. "What idea who they might've been?"

"Why should that be important to you?" Corrente asked. "His son's gone out. He took a matchbook from his trouser pocket, struck a match, and held it to the tip of the cigar, puffing, filling the room with billowing smoke. "'Cause, you know," he said, "maybe this is the no right comin' to neighborhood, you understand?"

"I understand that's the prevailing attitude, Carella said.

"Which may not be the wrong attitude," Corrente said. "I know I'm thinking, thinking this is a bunch of prejudiced people treating the colored, is what you're saying. But maybe the same thing would've happened hadda been white, you follow me, Detective?" "No," Carella said. "I'm afraid I don't."

He did not like this man. He did not like the stubble on his chin, the potbelly hanging over his belt, or the stench of his cigars. He disliked the alleged boasts that his son Bobby had wielded the bat had cracked Hooper's head. Even the way he said "Detective" rankled.

"This is a nice neighborhood," Corrente said. "A family neighborhood. Hardworking people, clean kids. We want to keep it that way."

"Mr. Corrente," Carella said, "on Easter Sunday half a dozen niggers from this neighborhood attacked a black kid with baseball bats and beat him up."

chased him down the street to..."

"Yeah, the Hooper kid," Corrente said.

"Yes," Carella said. "The Hooper kid."

All of a sudden, Corrente seemed to know name of the East victim. All of a he seemed to know all about the fuss that St. Catherine's, although not ten minutes ago he hadn't know from nothing.

"You familiar with this kid?" Corrente asked.

"I've talked to him."

"What'd he tell you?" "He told me what happened to him here Street."

"Did he tell you what he was doing here on Eleventh Street?"

"He was on his way home from the..."

"No, no, never mind the bullshit," Corrente said, taking his mouth and waving it like a conductor's baton. "Did he he was doing here?"

"What was he doing here, Mr. Corrente?"

"Do you know what they call him down the schoolyard? On Monday The elementary school? You know what they call him there?" said. "What do they call him there?"

"His nickname? Did he tell you his nickname?"

"No, he didn't."

"Go ask him what his nickname is down the schoolyard. Go was doing here Easter Sunday, go ahead."

"Why don't you save me the trouble?" Carella said.

"Sure," Corrente said, and inhaled deeply on the cigar. From cloud of smoke, he said, "Mr. Crack."

Carella looked at him.

"Is his nickname, right," Corrente said. fucking nigger C

There was a need that took him back here.

Something inexplicable that did, in fact, take back to the
murder he'd ew investigated, time and again, to stand alone
a bedroom or a hallway or a kitchen or roof or --
as was the case now --
a small cloisl garden suffused with the late afternoon sun
roses in riotous bloom.

The Crime Scene signs had all been taken the police were
the place so far gathering evidence was concerned. But still
the center of the garden, under spreading branches of the
tried sense what had happened here this past evening at six
yet only a little before the priest had been slain some time
Carella was not here now to weigh and to to discern and to
was here to feel courtyard and this murder, to absorb the
breathe it deeply into his lungs, have it seep his bloods
a part of him as his liver or his heart--
for only then could he to
understand it.

Mystical, yes.

A detective searching for a muse of sorts.

He recognized the absurdity of what he was doing, but bow
nonetheless, standing there in pled shade, listening to the
the springtime city beyond the high stone walls, trying to
through his very flesh whatever secrets the garden contained
something of the murderer's rage and the victim's terror
helter-
skelter about this small, contained and silent space, to
claimed by stone or rose or blade of grass, and held forever
like the image of a killer in a dead man's eye? And if so
in fact a possibility, then was it not also possible that
the rage of that final awful moment when knife entered flesh
recovered from all that had borne silent witness here in

He stood alone, scarcely daring to breathe.

He was not a religious man, but perhaps he was praying.

He stood there for what seemed a long time, some

ten or fifteen minutes, head bent, waiting for... He didn't

And at last, he took a deep breath and nodded and went back to the rectory and into the small office :led into a nook that J. P. had once served as something else, could not imagine what secrets here, perhaps there were secrets everywhere.

The report from the Fingerprint Section had told him that a print recovered from the open drawer of the file cabinet had been found to be useful in any meaningful sense. There had been latents as various as scattered on the floor and separately delivered in an envelope marked CORRESPONDENCE FLOOR and then initialed by the last person he might be. Some of the latents the prints lifted from the priest's fingers thumbs. The rest of them were wild, with the idea that some had been left on correspondence by Kristin Lundgren.

Carella knelt beside the filing cabinet.

The bottom drawer, the one that had been open, was labeled

CORRESPONDENCE GL He opened the drawer, no danger in doing so. The Mobile Lab had been through here everything from a vacuum cleaner to tweezers. He felt around inside, along the back front panel. He found people Scotch-taped to the inside of a drawer, where no one but a thief would think of looking.

Correspondence, G-

L. Presumably, whoever thrown those papers all over the place was for something in this drawer, something with the letter of the alphabet that fell like L. Six letters altogether. He knew piece of paper the vandal had been looking whether or not he found it. Or even whether the ransacking had had anything to do with the murder. Carella was getting to his feet again when the man behind him said, "Excuse me, sir."

He turned from the filing cabinets.

Two young girls were standing just inside the entrance door of the office.

They could not have been older than thirteen, fourteen at

A blonde and one with hair as black as pitch.

The blonde was a classic beauty with a pale oval face, high cheekbones, a generous mouth, and dark brown eyes that gave her a thoughtful almost scholarly look. The other girl could have been a twin: the same delicate face, the same sculpted look, except her hair was black and her eyes were a startling almost electric blue. Both girls wore their hair in stylists' cuts that fell straight down to the shoulders. Both were wearing sweaters, skirts and in the Fifties bobby sox and loafers. They exuded a freshness that was arrogantly assumed only their own healthy young girls possessed, which was actually an asset of most teenage girls anywhere.

"Sir," the black-haired one said, "are you with the church?"

Same one who'd spoken not a moment before.

"No," Carella said, "I'm not."

"We thought they might have sent someone," the blonde said. "A man?"
"No," Carella said, and showed his shield and I.D. card. "I'm Detective Carella, Eighty-seven Squad." "Oh," the black-haired one said.

Both girls huddled in the doorway.

"I'm investigating Father Michael's murder, Carella said. "It's terrible," the blonde said.

The black-haired one nodded.

"Did you know Father Michael?" Carella asked "Oh, yes," the blonde said almost in unison.

"He was a wonderful person," the one said. "Excuse me, I'm Gloria Keely. My name is Gloria Keely."

"I'm Alexis O'Donnell," the blonde said. "I'm not anything."

Carella smiled.

"Nice to meet both of you," he said.

"Nice to meet you, too," Alexis said. means Catholic Youth Organization." ... Thoughtful brown eyes in her delicate, nothing, she had said. Meaning she was an officer of the something indeed, in she was easily the more beautiful of shy, and thoroughly appealing manner. wondered how parent th daughter Alexis could possibly have known she turn out beauty.

"Thank you," he said, and smiled.

"We were wondering about the funer tomorrow," Gloria said time it'll be.

So we can tell the other kids."

A grimace. A shrug. Still the little girl in the developi body.

"I really don't know," Carella said. "Maybe you can call archdiocese." "Mm, yeah, good idea," she said. Electric b sparkling with intelligence, midnight hair cascading to h head bobbing in agreement with a plan already forming. "Y happen to have the number, would you?"

"I'm sorry."

"Do you know what they'll be doing about mass tomorrow?"

The same soft, shy voice.

"I really don't know." "I hate to miss mass," she said.

"I guess we can go over to St. Jude's," Gloria said.

"I guess," Alexis said.

A heavy silence shouldered its way into the room, as if t death had suddenly made itself irretrievably felt. Father not be here this Sunday to say mass. They guessed they co Jude's, but Father Michael would not be there, And then - he would

never know which of the girls started it both were sudden

hugging each other. And holding each other in clumsy embrace
comforting each other small keening female sounds.

He felt utterly excluded.

The twins were watching television in the room at the other
house. Teddy Carella alone in the living room, waiting for
had called from the office to say he might be late, to work
dinner, he'd catch a hamburger something. She wondered if
walkin into danger again, there was so much danger there.

There was a time when the shield meant something.

You said, "Police," and you showed the and you became the
were everything shield represented, the force of law, the
this was what the shield represented. The represented civil
civilization meant body of law that human beings had created
over centuries and centuries. To themselves against others
against themselves as well.

That's what the shield used to mean.

Law.

Civilization.

Nowadays, the shield meant nothing.

the law was overwritten with graffiti, scrawled in blood
felt like calling the President the telephone and telling
weren't about to invade us tomorrow. Tell him

enemy was already here, and it wasn't the Russians.

The enemy was here feeding dope to our kids and killing on
streets.

"Hello, Mr. President?" she would say. "This is Teddy Carella
you going to do something?"

If only she could speak.

But, of course, she couldn't.

So she sat waiting for Carella to come home, and when at the knob turning on the front door, she leaped to her feet when the door opened, relief thrusting her into his arms

almost knocking him off his feet.

They kissed.

Gently, lingeringly.

They had known each other such a long time.

She asked him if he'd like a drink... Fingers flashing in language he knew so well... ... and he said he'd love a n then went down the hall to say hello to the kids.

When he came back into the living room, she handed him the mixed, and they went to sit on the sofa framed in the three windows at the far end of the room. The house was the sort one might have admired, a big Victorian white elephant in a sort of Riverhead that had once boasted many similar houses, each with three or four acres of land, all dead and gone now, all gone. Carella house was a reminder of an era long past, a more graceful time in America, the gabled white building with wrought-iron fence all around it, a large tree-shaded corner plot, no longer all those acres, of course, those days of land and nothing of the dim, distant past.

He sat drinking his gin martini.

She sat drinking an after-dinner cognac.

She asked him where he'd eaten putting snifter down for a while so she could free use of her hands and he watched her r, finally answered in a combination of voice sign, said he'd gone to the Chinese joint Culver, and then he fell silent, sipping at the bent. He looked so tired. She knew him well. She loved him.

He told her then how troubled he was by murder of the priest.

It wasn't that he was religious or anything..

"I mean, you know that, Teddy, I haven't inside a church got married, I don't believe in any of that stuff anymore

... but somehow, the murder of a man of God..

"I don't.even believe in that, people themselves to religion their lives spreading religion, any religion, I just don't that anymore, Teddy, I'm sorry. I you're religious. I know. Forgive me. sorry."

She took his hands in her own.

"I wish I could pray," he said.

And was silent again.

And then said, "But I've seen too much."

She squeezed his hands.

"Teddy... this is really getting to me," he said.

She flashed the single word Why?

"Because... he was a priest."

She looked at him, puzzled.

"I know. That sounds contradictory. Why should the death bother me? I haven't even spoken to a priest since... when we were married?

Angela? When was her wedding?"

Teddy's fingers moved:

The day the twins were born.

"Almost eleven years ago," he said, and nodded.

"That's the last time I had anything to do with a priest. ... ago."

He looked at his wife. A great many things had happened in years. Sometimes time seemed elastic to him, a concept that bent at will, twisted to fit ever-changing needs. Who was to say the twins were not now thirty years old, rather than eleven? that he and Teddy were not still the young marrieds they were then?

Time. A concept as confusing to Carella as was that of...

He shook his head.

"Leave God out of it," he said, almost as if he'd spoken his thoughts aloud. "Forget that Father Michael was a man of that

means. Maybe there are no men of God anymore.

Maybe the whole world..."

He shook his head again.

"Figure him only for someone who was..., okay, not pure, not but at least innocent."

He saw the puzzlement on her face, and realized she had missed his lips or his sloppy signing.

He signed the word letter by letter, and she nodded and smiled, and he said, "Yeah, think of him that way. Innocent. And, not? Pure of heart, anyway. A man who'd never harmed human entire life. Would never have dreamt of harming anyone. A man out the night, out of the sunset, into his peaceful grave the assassin with a knife."

He drained his glass.

"That's what's getting to me, Teddy. On Year's Eve, I caught smothered in her crib that was only five months ago, what twenty-sixth of May, not even five full And now another innocent people like..., like... people like that are getting killed if the..., if nobody gives a damn anymore..., if you kill a priest, kill a ninety-

yearol grandmother, kill a pregnant woman..."

And suddenly he buried his face in his hands.

"There's too much of it," he said.

And she realized he was weeping.

"Too much," he said.

She took him in her arms.

And she thought Dear God, get him out of this job before

Seronia and her brother were eating pizza in a joint on T had ordered and devoured one large pizza with extra cheese pepperoni, and were now working on the smaller pizza they next. Seronia was leaning forward over the table, a long mozzarella cheese trailing from her lips to the folded web of her hand, eating her way up the string toward the slice of pizza. He watched her as if she were walking a tightrope a hundred feet above the ground.

She bit off the cheese together with a piece of the pizza, swallowed and washed it down with Diet Coke. She was very sure that the white guy throwing pizzas behind the counter was a jerk. She was wearing an exceptionally short mini made to look like leather. Red silk blouse with a scoop neck. Dangling red

Black patent pumps. Thirteen years old and being eyed up by a white man shoveling pizza in an oven.

. "You shoonta lied to him," she told her brother.

"He fine out why you was on. "Leventh Street, he be back."

"You the one say they was nothin' to lose," I-looper said.

"That dinna give you no cause to lie."

"I tole him basely d'troof," Hooper said.

"No, you lied about Fat Harol'."

"So whut? Who gives a shit about that skinny li'l fuck?"

"Sayin' as how he do crack. Sheee-
it, man, he a momma's boy doan know
crack fum his own crack."

Hooper laughed.

"Sayin' as how he wenn to a crack house, bought hisself a
An' paintin' yourself like a..."

"It was true we wenn t'church t'gether, though, me an' Ha
said.

"I doan do no dope," Seronia said, imitating brother talk
"an' I doan run dope none a'these mis'able dealers comes
a'spoil d'chirren."

"This was the Man we talkin' to," Hooper "Whutchoo 'spec
him?"

"I never done no crim'nal thing in my Seronia said, still
fair imitation of he . brother's deeper voice. "Never!" s
clenched her fist and rapped it against her sin budding b

"Is 'zackly whut I tole the Man," Hooper said, grinned.

"I like to wet my pants when I heerd that, Seronia said,
head in admiration pride. "I goan be any kine a'nigger, i
good one," she mimicked. "Like Eddie Murphy."

And again shook her head and rolled her big brown eyes he

"Eddie Murphy, right," Hooper said.

"You goan wish you was Eddie Murphy when he comes roun' a
said. "'Cause he look to me like the kine a'fuzz doan let
he goan talk to the people 'long. "Leventh Street, an' so
tell him sumpin' you dinn tell him.

An' then he goan fine out whut happen 'tween you an' the
then you goan be in deep shit, bro."

"Am' nothin' happen 'tween me an' the pries'."

"'Sep' you hid yo' stash in the church," Seronia said, and another slice of pizza.

Willis did not get back to the house on Lane until almost that Saturday. He called her name the moment he stepped in.

There was no answer.

"Honey?" he called. "I'm home."

And again there was no answer. He was policeman, trained unexpected.

was, moreover, a policeman who had lived on the thin edge from the moment he'

committed himself to Marilyn Hollis. The worst he'd heard of this past Thursday night!

suddenly popped into his mind Perd6neme, sen

- and just as suddenly he was alarmed.

"Marilyn!" he shouted, and went tearing up the stairs. The landing made a sharp right turn on the landing and was starting up

second-

floor the third floor when he heard her voice coming from somewhere down the corridor.

"In here, Hal."

She was in the kitchen. Sitting at the butcher block table. The stainless steel ovens, refrigerator and range forming a curtain behind her.

She was holding a dish towel to her nose. The towel bulged. There was an empty ice cube tray on the table.

"I fell," she said.

Hand holding the dish towel to her nose, eyes wide above

it, flesh under the eyes already discolored.

"Down the stairs," she said. "I think I broke my nose."

"Well, Jesus, did you call the...?" "It just happened a ago," she said.

I'll call him," he said, and went immediately to the phone.

"I don't think they can do anything for a broken nose," she said. "I think it has to heal by itself."

"They can set it," he said, and began searching through the telephone directory on the counter under the wall phone. Rubenstein's name was Rubenstein. Willis realized all at once that he was irrationally irritated; the way a parent might become irritated if a child did something that threatened its own well-being. He was relieved that Marilyn had not hurt herself more badly, but annoyed that she had hurt herself at all.

"How'd you manage to fall down the goddamn stairs?" he said, shaking his head.

"I tripped," she said.

"Isn't his number in this thing?" he asked impatiently.

"Try D," she said. "For doctor."

More annoyed now, he turned to the D section of the directory and found through a dozen names and numbers in Marilyn's handwriting. He found a listing for Rubenstein, Marvin, Dr. He dialed the number. It rang four times and then a woman picked up. The doctor's office service advised Willis that the doctor was out of town. She asked if he should notify him standby, a Dr. Gerald Peter. "No," Willis said, "Never mind," and hung the phone back in its cradle.

"Come on," he said, "we're going to the hospital."

"I really don't think..." "Marilyn, please," he said.

He hurried her out of the house and into the car. He debated whether

hammer, decided against Use the siren on a personal matter take a fit. The nearest hospital Morehouse General on Cul Third, inside the precinct's western boundary. He there responding to a 1013, on the accelerator, ignoring traffic unless changing light posed a danger to another and then right turn on Third, wheeled the car squealing up the drive Emergency Room.

This was Saturday night.

Only eighteen minutes past eight, in fact, but the weekend begun in earnest, and the E.R. resembled an army field station black cops with identifying 87 insignia on their uniforms struggling to keep apart a pair of lookalike white goons very good job of cutting each other to ribbons. Their T-shirts, once white, now clung in tatters to bloody streamers of flesh.

One of the men had opened the other's face from his right jaw. The other man had slashed through the first guy's biceps and forearm all the way down to the wrist. The men screaming at each other, their hands cuffed behind their shoulder-butting the cops trying to keep them separated.

A resident physician who looked Indian and undoubtedly was there were more Indian interns than in the entire state of kept saying over and over again, quite patiently, "Do you want treatment, or do you wish to behave foolishly?" The two of this running commentary because they had already • behaved had probably been behaving foolishly all their lives, and now to stop behaving foolishly now, just because a foreigner was reasonable. So they kept bleeding all over the E.R. while sweating black cops struggled with a pair of enraged men of size and tried to keep their uniforms clean, and a saintly nurse patiently stood by with cotton swabs, a bottle of antiseptic of bandages and tried to keep her uniform clean, and an orderly circled warily, trying to mop the goddamn floor as spattered everywhere on the air.

Elsewhere in the room, sitting on the bench, or crowding the station, or standing about in various stages of distress Willis saw and registered with dismay:

A twelve-year-old Hispanic girl whose was torn open to reveal a training bra and budding breasts. Blood was streaming down inside her leg. Willis figured she'd raped.

A forty-year-old white man being supported

yet another police officer and yet another resident, who maneuvering him toward one of the cubicles so that the doctor, who looked to Willis like a gunshot wound through the left shoulder.

A black teenager sitting on the bench with one high-topped sneaker off and in his hands. His right foot was swollen to the size of a man's foot. It was a crime for a non-crime victim, but in precinct you never could tell.

There were also... There was Marilyn, period.

"Excuse me, doctor," Willis said,

red-headed resident standing at the nurse's station studying the chart. He glanced up as though wondering who had had the unspeakable. He didn't raise his voice here in the temple. On his face, there was a scornful, one-eyebrow-raised look of a person who knew without question that his calling was godly. It was a look that managed to combine distaste with dismissal, as though its wearer had already been punished and was now ready to punish whoever had dared fart in his presence.

But Willis's woman had a broken nose.

Unintimidated, he flashed the tin, announced his own godly name, "Detective Harold Willis" and then slapped the leather case. He thought though he were throwing down a glove. "I'm investigating this woman needs immediate medical attention."

What a homicide had to do with this woman's broken nose. In a glance, he was able to make this diagnosis the red-headed resident couldn't possibly imagine. But the look on the detective's face said that the matter was extremely urgent, the matter was in fact

critical, and there would be hell to pay if this woman's resulted in a bungled homicide investigation.

So the resident ignored all the other people clamoring for that Saturday night • purgatory and immediately tended to Woman's needs, determining (as he'd known at anyway) that in fact broken, and giving her an immediate shot for the setting the nose, and dressing it with plaster (such a be too) and writing a prescription for a pain-killer should she have difficulty getting through the night. Only then did he as had happened, and Marilyn told him unhesitatingly that she had fallen down a flight of stairs.

This was when Willis fully realized something he had only known from the moment he'd found her in the kitchen with her nose.

Marilyn was lying.

"But why did you lie to them?" Sally Farnes asked.

This was eight-thirty P.M. The two of them sitting on the little balcony outside their living room looking out at the lights of the night and the splendor of the sky overhead. Sunset stained the horizon an hour and a half. They had eaten an early dinner, their coffee out here onto the balcony, the brilliant show had beer/ their treat these past several weeks. Tonight's had not been all disappointing, a kale display of reds and oranges and blues culminating in a dazzle of stars across an intense

"I didn't lie," he said.

"I would say that allowing them to think you the priest has your differences..."

"Which we did," Farnes said.

Sally rolled her eyes heavenward.

She was a big woman with brown hair, full-breasted and wide across the

hips, a woman who had ironically chosen to remain childless, equipped with a body seemingly designed for childbearing. Where being thin and staying young were the twin aspirations of a woman past the age of puberty, Sally Fames at the age of thirty-three thumbed her nose at all the models in Vogue and called herself voluptuous, even though she was really twenty pounds overweight according to all the charts.

She had always been a trifle overweight, even when she was a child, but she'd never looked fat, she'd merely looked zaftig. - a term she understood - even then to mean voluptuous because a Jewish friend became class valedictorian told her so while he was feeling the back seat of his father's Oldsmobile. Actually, the boy was thinking of the word wollfistig, which indeed did mean voluptuous, whereas zaftig merely meant juicy. In any case, Sally had been voluptuous and juicy, and pleasantly plump besides, with deep blue eyes that promised a sexiness wanton enough to arouse the envy of a great many pimply-faced young men.

She still looked supremely desirable. Even sitting alone in the dark on her own balcony with her own husband, her legs were in a provocative manner, and the three top buttons of her blouse were open. There was a thin sheen of perspiration over her upper lip, and she was wondering if her husband had killed Father Michael.

"You know you had a fight with him," she said.

"No, no," he said.

"Yes, yes. You went there on Easter Sunday..."

"Yes, and we shook hands and made up."

"Arthur, that is not what you told me. You told me..."

"Never mind what I told you," Fames said. "We shook hands and made up. What I'm telling you now." "Why are you lying?" she asked.

"Let me explain something to you," he said.

"Those detectives..."

"You shouldn't have lied to them. You shouldn't be lying

"If you don't mind," he said, "you asked me question."

"All right," she said.

"Do you want an answer, or do you want to interrupting?" right."

"Those detectives came to see me because a was killed, do that? A priest. Do know who runs the police department in

"Who?"

"The Catholic Church. And if the church tells cops to find killed that priest, the cops are going to find him."

"That still doesn't..." "That's right, interrupt again,"

In the light spilling onto the balcony from the living room, eyes met hers. There was something fierce and unyielding. She could remember the last time she'd challenged him.

She wondered again if he'd killed Father Michael.

"Catching the real killer isn't important to them," he said. "The thing that matters is catching a killer, any killer. They're just store trying to make a big deal out of my differences with Michael. Was I supposed to tell them we'd had an argument on Sunday? No way. We shook hands and made up."

"But that's not what you did."

"That is what we did. Period."

From the street far below, the sounds of traffic filtered down, unreal somehow, the honking horns and ambulance sirens sounding like canned background sweetening for a daytime soap. They sat in the murmur of the city. The wingtip lights of an airplane glowed in the sky. She wondered if she should push this further. She knew him to lose his temper. She knew what could happen if he lost his temper.

"You see," she said, as gently as she could, "I just think

to lie about something so insignificant."

"You must stop saying that, Sally. That I lied."

"Because certainly," she said, still gently, still calmly weren't about to think that a silly argument..."

"But that's exactly what they were thinking.

That's exactly why they came to the store. Waving that da written! Finding something threatening in every paragraph supposed to say? What did you want me to say, Sally? That only the beginning? That we had a violent argument shortly written it? Is that what you wanted me to say?"

"All I know is that policemen can tell when someone is ly

"Nonsense."

"It's true. They have a sixth sense. And if think you wer Father Michael..."

let the sentence trail.

"Yes?" he said.

"Nothing."

"No, tell me. If they think I was lying Father Michael, t

"Then they may start looking for other things."

"What other things?"

"You know what things," she said.

Hawes was learning a few things about Krissie He learned, that she'd come to this from a little town in Minnesota..

"I love it here," she said. "Do you love it here?"

"Sometimes."

"Have you ever been to Minnesota?" "Never," he said.

"Cold," she said.

I'll bet."

"Everybody runs inside during the winter. You can freeze there in the snow and ice, you know. So they all run to the lock up behind them and wait till springtime before they faces again. It's a sort of siege mentality."

It seemed odd to be talking about the dead of winter when around them springtime was very much in evidence. They had the restaurant at a little after ten, and it was now almost thirty

and they were walking idly up Hall Avenue toward the Tower Midway. On nights like tonight, it was impossible to believe ever got mugged in this city. Men and women strolled together hand, glancing into brightly lighted store windows, buying hot dogs or ice cream or yogurt or souvlaki or sausages from the peddlers' carts on almost every corner, browsing the street bookstores that would be open till midnight, checking out the wares of the nighttime street merchants, stopping to listen to a tenor saxophonist playing a soulful rendition of Birth of a fat mellow notes floating out of the bell of his golden horn upward on the balmy air. It was a night for lovers.

They were not yet lovers, Hawes and Krissie, and perhaps never be. But they were learning each other. This was the difficulty: you met someone, and you liked what you saw, and then you hoped you learned about him or her would make sense, would make sense with whatever person you happened to be at this particular time in life. The way Hawes figured it, everything on where you were at any time. If he'd met Krissie a year ago, he'd have had with Annie Rawles to have and pursued any other relations ten years ago, he found it difficult to which women had been in his life at given time. Once there had been another Krissie, Christine, actually, close but not Christine Maxwell. What hadn't she? May was the month for forgetting.

"How'd you happen to start working uptown?" asked.

"There was an ad in the paper," she said. "I looking for time and the job at church sounded better than waitressing."

"Why part time?"

"Well, because I have classes, you know, and I have to make

Oh, Jesus, he thought, an actress.

"What kind of classes?" he asked hopefully.

"Acting, voice, dance..."

Of course, he thought.

"And I work out three times a week at the gym..."

Certainly, he thought.

"So the job at the church is just to keep me going, you know

"Uh-huh," he said out loud.

"Till I get a part in something..."

"Right, a part," he said.

Every actress he'd ever met in his life had been a totally
thoroughly self-
centered airhead looking for a part in something.

"Which is why I came here, of course," she said.

"I mean, we've got the Guthrie out there and all, but that's
regional theater, isn't it?"

"I guess you could call it that," Hawes said.

"Yes, well, it is, actually," Krissie said.

He had once dated an actress who was working in a little
downtown in a musical revue called Goofballs written by a
reviewed books while he was learning to become Stephen Soderbergh.

If he reviewed books as well as he wrote musical revues,
the world were in serious trouble. The actress's name was
and she SWORE this was her real name even though her driver's

(which Hawes big detective that he was -- happened to peek at while she was still asleep naked in his apartment the morning a met) read Marie Trenotte, which he later learned meant The Trenotte not the Marie. Three nights was the exact amount spent with him before moving on to bigger better things, reviewer who had the show.

He had known another actress who'd been with a heroin dealer arrested this was cocaine and then crack became the drugs she told him she was up for the part of a cop on Hill Street in mind very much she moved in with him while her man was away some firsthand research, who she knew was dealing drugs and Alyce (with a y) Chambers and she was a red-head who mentioned that if they had children their hair would be red since both parents had red hair, did he ever notice that a lot of actresses and especially those who had who were cops? He had never noticed. She did get the part on Hill Street. Nor any other part ever tried out for, it was that bitch in she informed Hawes, pulling strings from all the while all the while she lived with him, she once talked about herself. He began: feel like a mirror.

Then one day she met a man with a Santa beard and twinkling eyes and a diamond ring the size of Antigua and he told her he had a little show out in Los Angeles and cared to accompany him. She could with him temporarily at a little house he owned on Malibu... not the Colony, but close to it... just south of Malibu. In fact..., closer to Santa Monica, in fact..., if that's what she had to do. She moved out the very next day. She still sent him a card every Christmas, but somehow she seemed to think his name was Hawes.

And he'd known another actress who washed out her panties for your thoughts," Krissie said.

"I was just thinking how nice, an actress," Hawes said.

"Actually," she said, "it's not very nice at all."

He braced himself for an Actress Atrocity Story.

Producer asking her to strip for a nude scene in a film that was to be a porn flick. Actor soul-

kissing her while they're auditioning together for a theaterful of potential back... "In fact," her voice caught, "I'm beginning to think I'm not so hot, I me an?"

He looked at her, surprised.

"No," he said. "What do you mean?"

"Not such a good actress, you know?" she said, and smiled pallidly. "No talent, you know?"

He kept looking at her.

"But I don't want to spend the rest of the night talking said, and took his hand. "Tell me how you got into police

She had tried to get the blood stains out of the carpet, a cop and he could spot a worked-over stain from a mile away. She similarly tried to soak the blood out of the monogrammed handkerchief in the master bedroom, a much more difficult job in that it was a Persian rug, whereas the carpet was a Persian with lots of red in it. She had soaked it on the towel and had taken it downstairs to the washing machine in the kitchen on the second floor, thrown it in with lot of other laundry, but the stain was still just visible, blood was tough. He'd known it was tough, worked for days trying to get blood stains off a wooden knife, even the blade of hatchet, witness Lizzie Borden, whom he had seen personally. Blood was blood. Blood told.

And now, so did Marilyn.

It was five minutes past eleven, and Saturday night was still

Across town and downtown, Cotton Hawes was about to ask Krieger to come to care to stop by his for a nightcap.

Closer to home, at the Church of the Bomless on Ninth and Schuyler Lutherson fastening a black silk cord about the neck of his cotton robe, rehearsing aloud the words Introit which he had heard at the beginning of midnight mass.

She told Willis about the first approach the two men had

Ramon Castaneda and Carlos Ortega.

"They gave you their names?" he said.

"Not then," she said. "This afternoon." She told him everything that had happened here in this bedroom this afternoon. Everything. The window they'd jimmied on the third floor, and now he was standing intently, his heart beating wildly, she could have been killed. If he agreed with her, they could not kill her if they expected the money from her, you can't collect from someone who's dead.

"Give them what they want," he said at once.

"Get rid of them."

"How?" she said.

"Sell the house, I don't care how. Get the money and give it to them. Send them back to Argentina."

"In a minute, right? Put a house worth seven-fifty on the market, and hope to sell it in a minute."

"Then borrow against it. Mortgage it to the hilt.

Liquidate whatever other assets you have, call your broker.

"There isn't that much, Hal."

"You left Buenos Aires with two million dollars!"

"I put five hundred of that down on the house, and spent the other five hundred furnishing it. I made some bad investments, a gold mining operation in Papua New Guinea, an electronics firm in Dallas. I gave loans to friends who never paid me back..."

"All right, how much can you raise?"

"If I sold off all the stock I have, let's say four, five, six, whatever I can get on a second mortgage. Unless somebody buys it tomorrow. Even so..." "Maybe they'll settle for that," Wil-

"I don't think so."

"Because if not..."

She looked at him.

"I can't let anything happen to you," he said. love you t

The worshippers had been informed that the before tonight begin at and so they had begun assembling in the old church past the hour. It was written in sacred Black Book that a business perforce be concluded before the hour of midnight further ordained that the Introit be said and the mass be there was scant church business to discuss. Toni there was who, if anyone, in congregation had painted the sign of the murdered priest's gate.

The assemblage numbered some fifty, people... If divisible impure... ... among whom were the nine who would preside participate in the ritual of the mass... If divisible by

The remaining forty-two were worshippers who had been told that the mass tonight would be more expressive of the joys of Satanism more solemn Mass of the Expulsion earlier this week. But contradiction to the announced purpose of the celebration clothing they wore appeared conservative if not austere, or grey or dun for an overall appearance of unrelieved drab angular and restrictive for an almost uniform look of sev

It was only when one looked more closely... A man standing of the church seemed to be wearing a long leather blacksm over black leather trousers. But when he turned in profile newcomer, it became evident that the trousers were in fact and that between the tops of those boots and the hem of t was naked flesh and nascent tumescence.

Through summise, surprise.

A redheaded woman sat with her legs crossed on the aisle back from the altar, her auburn tresses caught and contained by a black snood that added to them the seeming weight of mourning wearing as well a black silk , tailored grey slacks, and topped,

laced, leather shoes. But when she uncrossed her legs to and whisper something to a man on the row ahead of her, it was apparent that the slacks were crotchless and that beneath nothing. The revealed thatch of her fiery red pubic hair, lipstick-

tinted nether lips were in direct contrast to the trapped on her head and the plainness of her unpainted mouth.

Throughout that vaulted holy place, then, were unexpected ignorance, knowledge... .. glimpses of the flesh these came here tonight to honor. In Satan's name. they discreetly and ingenuously. Speaking whispers as befitted the sanctity of the meeting place, candid eyes met and held, neither roamed nor expressions never indicated that a promised later offering was being shown in fleeting preview:

A woman's severe black gown, cut high on neck and low on a cutout circle size of a quarter exposing the nipple of painted a red as deep as blood... A black man's grey home with a long-

sleeved black shirt and a han hood, his penis thrusting through an opening in trousers and held in an upright position by white ribbons wrapped around it and tied about waist... A beautiful Chinese woman a loosely crocheted black dress, flesh showing everywhere except where tightly woven patches covered her Venus mound and breasts... Through concealment

In many respects, this socializing before the mass began was very different in tone or appearance from the little party gatherings occurring all over the city tonight. Except that the group, among these people openly worshipping the Devil, the reverse order of their beliefs an honesty of intent that Lutherans considered less hypocritical. Coming through the curtains at the rear of the church now, he reflected solely the fervor of those who spoke most righteously for any God that he admire be it Jesus, Muhammed, Buddha or Zeus and wondered if people might not find a better home here at the Church of One. Because it seemed to him that those who most vehemently the sinful actions of unbelievers were those who most vigorously secretly pursued those actions. And those who defended them against the imagined onslaughts of infidels were those who in the name of whichever god they professed to serve, most often the sacred teachings of that god.

Come to Satan, Schuyler thought, and made the sign of the greeting, and then went directly to the living altar and passed his tongue over the forefinger and middle finger of his hand, the Devil's hand, wetting his fingers, and then ran his tongue slick and wet over the lips of Coral's vagina, from my lips and said in Latin, "By your leave, most beloved Lord, I kneel," which was a plea upon Satan's own altar for the Unborn One to remain patient yet a moment longer while this tiresome ceremony was attended to.

The worshippers fell silent as Schuyler stepped forward. Behind him was the living altar, Coral, with her legs spread wide on the knees, bare feet flat on the velvet-covered arms at her sides, clutching in each hand phallic-shaped candelabra in which was an unlighted black candle. The beginning of mass would be signified by the lighting of candles, followed by the recitation of the Mass, then the Invocation. For now, the deacon sub-deacons stood ranked behind the altar in readiness.

The four acolytes (four tonight rather than customary two) were a special following the high holy Feast of the Expiation, and solemnly in boy-girl pairs either side of the altar. Two eight-year-old girls, of whom was tall for her age, a boy who was eleven and another who was nine, all of barefooted and wearing simple tunics which they wore naked. Coral's long blonde cascade of hair reached the pointed end of the trapezoid, almost touching the cold stone floor.

Without preamble, Schuyler said, "The death of this priest is a most troublesome. It may bring unwanted, unneeded visitors to our door, may lead to suspicion of our order, and possible harassment from the police. Or perhaps even more serious measures from the authorities. I know, I don't care.

What I'm asking tonight is for anyone here among us, if anyone is responsible for painting an inverted pentagram on the gate of St. Catherine's church, to come up here and say you did it. I want to know then you know who you are, and I want you to come forward.

why you did it. So we can straighten this out."

There was silence out there in the congregation.

Hesitation.

And then a blond giant of a man rose and stepped out into was in his early twenties, weathered and suntanned and muscular, lean, wearing a pair of faded grey jeans and a T-shirt tie-dyed in varying swirls of black, black headband and black leather further keeping with the tone and stated purpose of the black leather thong was tied tightly around his left thigh inches below his crotch. No one so much as glanced at the seemed to notice that it held fastened against the man's bondage, freedom... ... a penis enormous by any standards fabric of his jeans... Through disguise, discovery...

... but clearly discernible in massive outline.

"I did it," he said. "I painted the priest's "Come on up, in afriel manner, but he was scowling. Perhaps because, handsome and considerably handsome so was the young man, and he constituted a threat to his leadership. Or sensed, even when the man reached the of the church, and even though he'd only eight short words, that here in the the Bornless One was Mends, too damn many of whom had been to the services here weeks.

"Tell us your name," Schuyler said, pleasantly But something coiled within "Andrew Hobbs," the young man said. "I come March."

Something Southern in his speech. The lilt. intonation. S as well. A more lilt.

"Jeremy Sachs introduced me here."

Sachs. Jeremy Sachs. Schuyler's memory for an image to connect face. A character trait. A verbal tic. Nothing "Yes?" he

"Yes."

"And the gate?"

"I did it," he said.

Through confession, condemnation.

"Why?"

"Because of her."

"Who?"

Was it possible, then, that he was not one of Dorothy's friends? The look of him, and the cleverness of the thong, the uncanny way he had it. But he hadn't yet said "her" name. And among those he had, the female pronoun was often substituted for the... "Her, my mother."

Ah, then. Were we still on the yellow brick road? . "What?" Schuyler asked.

They often nursed long-term grievances against "She went to him."

"Went to who?"

"The priest. And told him."

"Told him what?"

If only this wasn't so much like pulling teeth.

"That I've been coming here. That Jeremy took here. That he was doing... things here."

Jeremy. Sachs. And now the name took on visual sions, Jeremy was squat, rather looking young white homosexual'm without obvious friends, a longtime traveler the Munchkins'm who'd declared himself Devil by reversing his own natural preferences going down to the skelter and willy-nilly on every naked snatch offered to Satan within the sacrosanct walls.

Schuyler could not recall seeing his young friend at any

before tonight, but there was wholesale confusion and res In any case, here he was now, the friend of a friend of D himself, who had just now confessed defiling dead priest' of his goddamn All mothers should be forced to suck a hor thought. Including my own.

"But why did you paint the gate?" he asked.

"As a statement," Hobbs said.

Schuyler nodded. So what this was, it was a case of somec Mama to keep out life. Completely understandable. This wa any hard feelings for the priest. bad intentions here at somebody makin personal family statement. But nonetheless statement you have to make now," said, "is to the police. know you paint that pentagram as any kind of warning anyt priest was killed, see, and we want his murder connected in any So what I suggest you do is leave here right minut home and change clothes..."

"What's wrong with my clothes?" Hobbs

"Nothing," Schuyler said. "In fact, what wearing is well-suited..."

He didn't know he was making a pun.

"... to the ceremony tonight. But it might be misundersto police, see, so go put on something that'll make 'em thin bank." "I do work in a bank," Hobbs said.

There was laughter in the assemblage. Laughter of relief, wasn't going to be as bad as it had appeared at first. Yo here had argued with his mother, had gone off in a snit, had painted the sign of his religious belief on the enemy explain all this to the police and they'd understand, and his way, and everyone could go right on practicing his ch in freedom again, this was a wonderful country, the U.S. four minutes to midnight.

Hobbs asked where the nearest police station was, and fro standing behind the living altar, Stanley Garcia who had early yesterday morning gave him directions to the 87th E asked if he could come back here for the mass after he'd

police, but Schuyler pointed out that the doors would be stroke of midnight, which in fact was now only three minutes perhaps Hobbs had better get moving. Hobbs appeared to be left the church. One of the worshippers closed and bolted behind him, and then dropped the heavy wooden crossbar in effect double-locking the doors.

It was a minute to midnight.

The church was expectantly silent.

The red-head in the grey slacks sat with her knees pressed close together, her head bent.

"It is the hour," Schuyler said, and signaled to his sub-deacons to come forward and light the candles.

The sub-deacons tonight were two nineteen-year girls who looked like sisters but who weren't cousins. Both brunettes with brown hair, wearing the customary black robes of the naked beneath the ritual that consecration of the altar by the minister, sub-deacons

(traditionally female) would then turn and in sequence before the Solemnly and silently, the girls whose were Heather and Coral to the altar, in reverence before her, and then parted, one to the other to the right, where Coral's clutched the thick candelabra. sputtering, they lighted both black candles, the altar to where Stanley Garcia with an oxidized and black censer in hand. The girls lighted the incense, and accepted thuribles from Stanley. Swinging on the ends of their shoulder chains, sweetened with incense first the altar and surrounding chapters and then went up center aisle to spread the cloying incense entire church. They returned then to stand flanking the

It was time for the Introit.

The word itself derived from the Middle English word for from the Old French introit from the Latin introitus. It was not in the French manner but rather to rhyme with Introit -It," as many in the congregation were fond of explaining. In Christian

introit was in fact an entrance, the beginning as such of it consisted either of a psalm verse, an antiphon, or the like. In the true church of the Devil, however, the introit was a personal opening dialogue intended as a despoliation of the introduction to the Devil, who would be invoked more seriously tonight. The ritual blasphemy that Schuyler and the four acolytes were about to perform was, in essence, a rude dismissal or acknowledgment of Satan Daemon est Deus Inversus: The Devil is the other side of God.

Schuyler nodded to his deacon.

Stanley rang the heavy bell nine times, three times facing the altar, and then kept turning counterclockwise to ring the bell at each remaining cardinal point of the compass.

The air now purified, Schuyler went to stand in the open space before the naked legs of the altar.

Facing the assemblage, he lifted both arms, and at the signal with the fingers of both hands. At this signal the four acolytes came to face him, a boy and a girl on each side.

In Latin, Schuyler said, "In nomine magni dei nostri Satan."

In the name of our great god Satan... "... we stand before thee, O altar."

And in their piping voices, the acolytes responded in unison. In Latin, "We beseech assistance, oh Lord, save us from the evil one."

"To our Lord who created the earth and the heavens, the sun and the moon, day, the darkness and light," Schuyler intoned, "to our Lord who causes us to exult..."

"Oh Lord, deliver us from unjustness," children chanted.

"Lord Satan, hearken to our voices," Schuyler said. "Demonstrate your terrible power..."

"And give to us of thy immeasurable largess."

"Dominus Infernus vobiscum," Schuyler said. "The Infernal Lord is with you."

And the children responded, "Et tecum. And with you."

And the assemblage rose to its feet and s tumultuously and
"All hail Satan, hail Satan!"

Detective Meyer Meyer was in the sq only by trying up on
half reports that were already weeks late. when a blond y
wearing a dark pencil-
stripe suit materialized on the other side of the
wooden rail divider to the squadroom.

"Excuse me," he said.

"Yes?" Meyer said, looking up from his typewriter.

"I'm looking for whoever's investigating the priest murder
downstairs told me there might be somebody in the squadroom."

"Not on the priest case," Meyer said, and thought Never t
volunteer. "Come in, please," he said, "I'm Detective Meyer
help you."

Hobbs opened the gate and walked into the room.

Judging from the way he looked it over, he'd never before
police station. He shook hands with Meyer, accepted the c
offered, introduced himself, and then said, "I'm the one
that garden gate."

Which, as it turned out, was the opening gun in a salvo a
mother, who to hear him tell it --

was the cause of all his miseries.

Not only was she responsible for his homosexuality... "I
know," he said.

"Wouldn't have guessed," Meyer said.

"Yes," he said, "Which of course is Abby''s fault, dressi
little girl's dresses and forcing me to wear my hair in a
pageboy..."

At which point Meyer, while still wondering about the gar
treated to the recitation of a childhood atrocity story m
horrifying than most atrocity stories he'd heard except t

resulted in what Hobbs described as a human being "not moving right" a great homosexuals knew Sondheim Lyrics by

Hobbs kept referring to his beloved mother "Abby," sarcastically spitting out the word as though they were great good buddies. He hadn't seen her since she'd moved to Calm's Point six ago, knew nor cared to know her address or telephone number. He despised her and blamed her exclusively for current style, which incidentally included worshipping the Devil. So, naturally, an inverted pentagram on St. Catherine's gate.

"... to let her know I'd worship wherever I well please," he had nothing to do with priest."

"Then why'd you pick his gate?" Meyer asked.

"To make a point," Hobbs said.

"What was the point?" Meyer asked. "I be missing it."

"The point was she went to this priest complained about me Bornless..."

"Bornless?"

"The Church of the Bornless One, when she no right to do anything incidentally, he had no right either, preaching about our church congregation. No one was telling his congregation.

which church they should go to. Nobody at Bornless was running saying Jesus is a menace, which by the way, he is, but we're ourselves."

"But Father Michael wasn't keeping his beliefs to himself, you're saying?"

"Only in passing, don't get me wrong. I had nothing at all to do with Father Michael. Though I must tell you, after Abby went back he gave a few hot little sermons denouncing the Devil-worshippers up the block.., well, four blocks away, actually, but close enough wetting your pants worried that Satan's going to come burn this shitty little church." "So what you did," Meyer said, "was

Devil's sign..."

"Yes."

"On the priest's garden gate..."

"Yes."

"But not as a warning to the priest."

"No."

"Then why?"

"To let Abby know she should keep her big mouth shut."

"I see. And now you want us to understand you didn't pair malice."

"Correct. And I didn't kill that priest, either." "Who sa

"Nobody."

"Then why are you here?"

"Because Schuyler doesn't want you guys harassing us over thought it'd be good..."

"Schuyler?"

"Schuyler Lutherson, who runs Bornless." "I see," Meyer s thinking he'd have tell either Carella or Hawes about thi morning chat, because perhaps one or the other them might Schuyler Lutherson why was so worried about police harass

"Thanks for stopping by," he said. appreciate your candor

Hobbs wondered if he meant it.

Sitting on the third row of benches, the redhead the grey slacks watched the children as rushed to escort Stanley t hurrying on each side of him as he approached with a cush black velvet pillow. Schu, grasped the sword by its silk-tasseled

handle. red-head's legs parted slightly. The children back at the altar again. Schuyler raised the over his head, turned suddenly hanging sign of Baphomet, and shouted in a hoarse with em "Bornless One, I invoke "Thou who didst create the universe" chanted.

"Thou who didst create the earth and heavens..."

"The darkness and the light..."

"Thou who didst create the seed and the fruit," Schuyler cue two of the acolytes the tall eight-year-old girl and the shorter eight-year-old boy stepped forward and faced each other.

Holding the handle of the sword in one hand and the tip in the other, Schuyler lowered it horizontally over their heads. The red-head in the tailored grey slacks leaned forward expectantly.

In a high piping voice, the little boy said, "Behold! My penis is erect!" and lifted his tunic to show his limp little penis.

And the little girl responded, "Behold! My fruit drips neon!" She raised her tunic to show her small hairless pudendum.

"My poison shall erupt and engulf!" the little boy said.

"My venom shall enclose and erode!" the little girl said.

"My lust is insatiable!" the little boy said.

"My thirst is unquenchable!" the little girl said.

"Behold the children of Satan," Schuyler said softly and

Symbolically, he gently touched the tip of the sword first to the boy's genitals and then to the girl's.

He returned the sword to the pillow. Stanley carded it back. Two nineteen-year-old subdeacons were waiting for him, the hems of

their robes fastened above their waists, their hands resting on their naked flanks, palms turned outward toward the congregation.

The red-

head on the third row placed her hands on her thighs and her legs a trifle wider.

Schuyler approached the altar.

"In thy name, oh Bornless One," he said, "I offer myself of thy power and thy will."

He threw up his robe.

"Glory to God," he said, "may all hail Satan.

Glory to Satan," he said, "whom we love and cherish. All said, "we sing glory to thy name. All praise Satan," he said, "honor to thy name. All bless Satan," he said, and positioned at the joining of the altar, "we adore thee, Great Lord, we adore the Infernal Lord, we cry unto thee, all hail Satan, all hail Satan."

As he thrust himself onto and into the altar, gong sounded and the assembly chanted in unison and in Latin, "Ave Satan, Ave Satan, Ave Satan."

The red-head on the third row spread her leg wide.

The mass was beginning in earnest.

7'

At eleven o'clock that Sunday morning, the twenty-seventh day of May, they buried Father Michael Birney in the Cemetery of the Mary of Mt. Carmel, all the way uptown in Riverhead, where still a little ground left in which to put dead people. The man who delivered the funeral oratory was a man named Father Francis, who had been appointed by the archdiocese of Isola East as teacher of St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church. Among the mourners was Detective Steve Carella of the 87th Precinct. Father Oriole read his elegy from the first letter of the apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

"The first man was of earth," he read, "formed from dust. from heaven. Earthly men are like the man of earth, heavenly men like the man of heaven. Just as we resemble the man from

Carella studied the small group of assembled mourners.

Father Michael's sister, Irene Brogan-- who made the arduous trip from Japan via Los Angeles order to be here for the funeral to stand by graveside now, listening intently to Father Oriella's care text. Martha Hennessy, the priest's housekeeper, had introduced Carella he'd arrived. A petite woman with eyes, she told him happy to help with investigation in any way possible. Carella was eager to talk to her, and asked if he could have a moment after the service.

"... to tell you a mystery. Not all of us shall be asleep, but we are to be changed -- in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the sound of last trumpet..."

The forecasters had promised continuing weather for the weekend. A blazing sun shone down mercilessly on the black coffin poised above the dozen or more young people stood at the grave, listening to Father Oriella. Carella recoiled in the group of teenagers the two young girls spoken to yesterday. They were sedately today, not in black--

this was an alien color in a young person's wardrobe --

dark shades of blue that seemed appropriate to the day's burial. They stood side by side, the one with black hair (Gloria, name?) and blonde girl, Alexis. Both girls were crying. But so was the entire group of young people with them. He had a well-loved man, this priest.

"... then will the saying of Scripture be fulfilled: 'Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is thy victory? Oh, death, where is thy sting?' The sting of death is sin, and sin gets its power from the law. But thanks be to God who has given us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Poking about the fringes of the crowd like scavenger birds

dozen reporters and their photographers, but there were no press crews in evidence, and this surprised Carella. The priest's funeral received extensive coverage, especially on television, even on the radio. The funeral broke last Thursday. Carella was aware that this was already late in the clock was ticking and the older a case got, the wider became the murderer's edge.

"Lord, hear our prayers," Father Oriella said. "By raising the dead, you have given us faith. Strengthen our hope that our brother, will share in His resurrection."

Here in the sunshine, the assembled priests paid honor to their own, standing in solemn black at the edge of the grave, listening to Father Oriella's final words. Highranking police officers were there too, in blue and in braid, a show of color and support. The citizens of this fair city know via the newspaper people that the men were still on the job, if only to weep huge crocodile tears at the graveside.

"Lord God, you are the glory of believers and the life of the world. Our Son redeemed us by dying and rising to life again. Our brother was faithful and believed in our own resurrection. Give us the blessings of the life to come. We this, oh Lord, amen." The mourners murmured.

A hush fell over the grave site.

There must have been a signal, someone have pressed a button, the coffin on its strap, began lowering hydraulically, a photo flash could not and would not be missed by paparazzi, who moved to follow the coffin between heaven and earth, silhouetted against the blue sky. Another sign perhaps, because the lift stopped, and the coffin was suspended now some several inches below the lip of the grave. Father Oriella said another almost a private communication between the slain brother in Christ, whispering, his moving, and then a sign of the cross the grave and knelt to scoop up a handful of earth and sprinkled it onto the coffin gleaming in sunshine.

The mourners came now with baby roses distributed by the funeral home, came in a orchestrated effort to lend dignity to death, to say a solemn farewell, each passing this for the last time, pausing at the grave with its shiny black coffin waiting to descend, to be lowered onto the coffin, the priests from churches all over the city, from Headquarters downtown, the priest's sister Irene Bro

forty parishioners from St. Catherine's, and the dozen or so from the church's Catholic Youth Organization, all filing their roses in farewell, and now the pair from yesterday, and Alexis.

And then it was over.

As they moved past the grave and away from it, starkly ill-clear sharp light the photographers must have loved, then an unseen signal, and the hydraulic lift began humming again. The coffin dropped slowly into the grave, deeper, deeper, until it was completely out of sight.

Two gravediggers freed the canvas straps from beneath the coffin. They were beginning to shovel earth onto the coffin and into the pit. Carella walked over to where Irene Brogan was standing with Oriella, telling him what a beautiful service it had been.

He stood by awkwardly.

At last, she turned from the priest who had replaced her. He said, "I'm sorry to have kept you waiting. Please forgive me."

Tear-streaked face. Blue eyes shining with tears.

Close up, in this harsh light, she looked to be in her early thirties. A woman who just missed being pretty, her separate parts so close to adding up completely satisfying whole. They walked to the funeral home. Limousines were waiting in line, shining in the sun. Beside the one of the closest limousine, Carella watched mourners pass behind Irene, heading their cars or the closest public transport. Riverhead was a long way from home.

"Mrs., Brogan," he said, "I don't mean to on your family."

She looked at him, puzzled.

"But in the course of the investigation..., early as a matter of fact I read a letter you wrote to brother. Which was when I started to see you in Diego." "I think I know the letter you mean," she said.

"The one referring to his letter of the twelfth."

"Yes."

"In which he told you... I'm just putting all together from what I wrote, Mrs. Brogan. But seemed he was deeply troubled about it, was."

"What would that have been?"

Irene sighed heavily.

"My brother was wholly devoted to God," said.

"I've no doubt," Carella said.

And waited.

"But even Christ was sorely tempted in wilderness," she said.

And still Carella waited.

"Let's... can we get in the car?" she asked. He opened the door of the limousine for her and then followed her into an interior that was as a confessional. The door closed behind him with a snug click. And now, here in this dim and secret space with its tints of blue and its black leather seats, Irene Brogan seemed to find the words she needed to tell her brother's story. She described first the letter he wrote her on his last letter... "It was postmarked the twelfth, but I didn't get it till the Coast till the following Thursday, the seventeenth. My husband and I were leaving for Japan that Saturday. He sells heavy machinery on a business trip, he's still there, in fact. I... I called him on that Friday. And when... when he told me what was really in the letter... the letter... you see, the letter had only hinted at it when I called him that Friday..."

At first, he is reluctant to speak about it, The Priest.

He tells her it's nothing, really, he shouldn't have written it at all, everything's fine now, she must be very excited about going to Japan, hm?

But Irene knows him too well. She was thirteen when he was born. She puts her at forty-five now, and she raised him almost as if he were her own child, her mother being a businesswoman who ran off to Japan one day and then complained of it all weekend long. She

brother all too well, and she knows he is hiding now, except for a trip to Japan indeed; she accompanied her husband to Japan on a business trip he's made in the past six years! So bides he listens patiently to him telling about someone in the congregation who has taken umbrage over his sermons about the tithe... "He mentioned someone, did he?"

"I don't remember the man's name. But, yes, . . . was one of the things troubling him..."

... and someone's mother coming to seek and advice about her son's involw with, of all things, devil worship.., and all that was beginning to rattle on by then," said, "do you know the way they sometimes When they're trying to avoid what's really the problem, saying these things weren't bothering him.., the tithe.., the drugs... the ... "The what?" Carella said.

"Well... drugs, yes. My brother seemed to someone was using the church as a sort storehouse. For drugs. He tore the whole place apart looking for where they were but..."

"Are you saying illegal drugs? substances?"

"Well, yes, I'm sure that's what he meant."

"He found drugs inside the ohurch?"

"Well, no, he didn't. But he certainly looked for m. At first he told me. As I said, he was starting to get a bit worried then. Because he was coming to what the real problem was, that he had to have a damn thing to do with any of the little

things he was talking about. It had to do with..."

A woman.

Her brother is involved with a woman.

He does not tell Irene how this started or even how long it has been going on, but it is tormenting him that he has violated his own chastity and himself in a situation from which there is no escape. He loves Jesus Christ and he loves this woman and they are incompatible and irreconcilable. He mentions that he has thought of suicide... "He told you this?"

".Yes. On the telephone."

"Had he considered a way of doing it?"

"What?"

"Did he tell you how he planned to kill himself?."

"Well, no. I mean, what difference would that make?" "A L said.

"It frightened me, I can tell you that," Irene said.

"I almost cancelled the trip. I thought I'd come east ins my brother, see him through this..."

But he tells her that taking his own life would be even g breaking his solemn vows.

swears to her and to the good Lord Jesus that he will not such thoughts again, swears on the telephone. At Irene's well that he will tell this woman he cannot go! with a re is tearing him apart, continue deceiving God in this way, dearest to him. He will once again renounce flesh, as he' so long ago, and pray God's help in living forevermore a spiritual life.

He promises this to his sister.

"And then..., when I got the call from Quentin... we'd jus from dinner.i was a lovely night there in Tokyo, the blos bloom, the air so sweet..., and he told me my brother was and... first thing I thought was that he'd killed He'd do broken his promise to me."

The limo went still.

"But this is worse, isn't it?" Irene "Someone killing him

Yes, Carella thought. This is worse.

Not to kill him, no. To talk to him. To ask him her. Beca condemn a person first hearing his side of the story, isn

can't just begin hating a person until you prove sure that there really is a reason to hate him. This is a man of God, don't you think? Not someone like you or me, this is a man dedicated to his Lord. If he's going to break the rules that way, then he should be doing one thing and doing another thing. The rules should apply to him. That's the way rules work.

Everybody knows you have to stop when a traffic light turns red. If you don't stop when it's red, then nobody is obeying the rule. It could be an accident, and someone might get killed. Of all people, you should be the one obeying rules, especially the promises he made to you. If you make a promise to God, you have to keep it or God will stop you. That's in the Bible, vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord. Kissed her. But maybe there was some explanation. On the

Maybe he had some explanation for why he was doing that. There was something in church custom or church law that you had to kiss her on the lips in order to do whatever. Bless her maybe.

Greet one another with a holy kiss, that's in the Bible. It's right to kiss in Scriptures, it was common practice. The man who kissed him was the man and he came up to Jesus at once and said, "Lord, I have sinned against you and he kissed him. Or when he's sitting at table in the Eucharist and the sinner brings an alabaster flask of ointment and anoints him with her tears and kisses his feet, this was Jesus getting him kissed.

It was common in the Bible, look at Solomon, O that you would be covered with the kisses of your mouth for your love is better than anointing oils are fragrant, your name is oil poured out, and the maidens love you. So maybe there was some explanation, and if you ask a person and ask what the reason is, if there is a reason, you should explain that he was only greeting with a holy kiss, you should not ask for a book by its ask and it shall be delivered unto you. Was it a holy kiss? Ask. To inquire. To discover. To find out from his own lips that there was not a man kissing a beautiful woman, but was instead a holy priest, performing some kind of office. What was he was doing. A holy kiss, the Bible, there are holy kisses in the true, every word of it. Not to kill him, no. To tell him about her. But how could he put his hands under her skirt and feel down her ankles, this was not a holy kiss, this could have been a holy kiss, not with her blouse open her naked breasts showing, like clusters of the vine, and the scent of your like apples. Kisses like the best wine goes down smoothly, gliding over

down smoothly, goes down no this was holy kiss it was not

The call came at twenty minutes to one afternoon, not five. Willis had gone for the Sunday papers. The moment she heard Marilyn realized they'd been watching house, waiting for her before they placed the call.

In Spanish, the voice said, "Good afternoon."

Buenas tardes.

She recognized the voice at once. The handsome one. The one

In Spanish, she answered, "I've been waiting for your call."

"Ah, did you know we would call?"

Politely. In Spanish. No sense playing games now. They knew. If they were to do business, it would be simpler to do it in her native tongue. From now on, nothing but Spanish.

"Yes, in fact, I was hoping you'd call," she said.

"We have business to discuss."

"Ah."

A note of sarcastic skepticism in that single word.

The Spanish were wonderful at conveying shades of meaning with the tone of the voice alone.

"Yes. I want to pay you. But I'll need time."

"Time, yes."

"But I'm not sure I'll be able to raise the entire two million."

"Ah, what a pity."

"Because even if I sell everything I own..."

"Yes, that is surely what you must do." " . I'll still be

"Then perhaps you should sell yourself as well."

A smile in his voice. A nod to the former hooker.

Sell yourself as well. We understand you were good at sel

"Look," she said, "I think I can raise million, but that's less."

Mds o menos.

There was a silence on the line. Then:

"You owe us a great deal more than half a mi More or less

"To begin with, I don't owe you or your big anything. If it belongs to anyone, it to..."

"It belongs to whoever will kill you if you pay it."

"Let's talk straight here, please," she "You're not going

"You're mistaken."

"No, I'm not mistaken. You kill me, you don't any of the were you, I'd settle for the hun..." "If I were you," he and silkenb would recognize that there are worse things b
"Yes, I know that," she said.

"We thought you might know that."

"I do. But I've only got so many arms and legs., "Y to ca

And paused meaningfully.

"Y tus pechos," he said.

And paused again.

"Y asi sucesivamente," he said.

i Her face... Her breasts ..

,. And so on.

The last three words, though spoken softly and usually -
Y asi
sucesivamente implied unspeakable acts.

She was suddenly very frightened again.

"Look, you're right," she said, "it's true, I don't want
happen to me. But..."

"Then you should learn not to cut people."

"If you're saying you're going to hurt me even if I do co
money..."

"I'm saying we'll surely hurt you if you don't come up wi
Is what I'm saying."

"I understand that."

"I hope so."

"But what I'm saying is that it's impossible to come up w
money. Is what I'm saying."

"Then that's too bad."

"Look, wait a minute."

"I'm still here."

"How much time do I have here?"

"How much time do you need?"

"Even to raise the five hundred, I'd need a week, ten day

"That is out of the question."

"Then how much time? Name a fucking amount of time I" "Ah

Chastisingly. Scolding her for the language used. Tsk, ts

She said nothing for several seconds. Re control. Calming

she said, "I need, talk to people who can turn assets into time. I have to know exactly how much have." "Wednesday," she had the he'd picked a deadline out of the air.

"I don't think I can manage that," she "That's not enough

"It will have to be enough time."

"I don't think you understand."

"We understand completely."

"No. Look, can you listen to me a Please? I want to pay you understand that, I want this thing to be over and with. E

"So do we."

"But you can't show up on someone's and expect them to raise dollars in.

"You tell me," he said.

"How much time I'll need?"

"Yes. Tell me."

"You understand I can only raise half a would be imposs..

"No, the full two million. How much time?"

"Say."

"Can I get back to you?"

"We'll call you. Tell us when."

"This is Sunday..."

"Yes, a day of rest."

Sarcasm in his voice, the son of a bitch.

I'll have to make some calls tomorrow, find out how long

"Good. What time?"

"Can you call me at three-thirty? No later than that."

"Why? Will your boyfriend be coming home?"

"Three-thirty," she said. "Please. But, you know, I really think I should prepare yourself for..."

And hesitated.

Silence.

He was waiting.

The silence lengthened.

"Because you know... I really meant it when I said..."

And again she hesitated.

Because she knew what he would say if she told him again: impossible to raise much more than half a million. He would threaten with punishment, raise fears of acid or steel, promise her more. But the facts had to be stated.

"Listen," she said, "I'm being completely honest with you. I don't want to get hurt, but there's no way I can possibly raise more than half a million. Well, maybe a little more, I'm being honest with you. You realize that, but two million is absolutely out of the question. I just can't do it, there I can turn half a million into two million overnight. There was another long silence.

And then he surprised her.

He did not threaten her again.

Instead, he offered a solution.

"There is a way," he said.

"No there "

" " "La St, he said. cocafna."

And hung up.

Carella did not get back to the squadroom un almost two t
afternoon, after extracti from Irene Brogan a promise tha
call fi housekeeper in San Diego as soon as she retumeff
had previously asked her if she still h her brother's May
letter. Irene said s thought it might be somewhere on her
to the housekeeper was to ask her to look for tt letter.
it, she was to Fed Ex it to Carel at once. Irene seemed t
why he want, to read the letter himself: a fresh eye, an
uninvolvement, a mind trained to search for nuan of meani
assured him once again that h brother neither in his lett
she'd spok, to him on the telephone had revealed the name
whom he was involved.

Meyer's note was waiting on Carella's desk.

It was typed on a D.D. form, but it was really memo and r
such. Informal and r, it detailed Andrew Hobbs's visit to
late last night (early this morning, to confess that he'd
pentagram the church gate and to explain that "it was not
made him do it, but his mother Abby."

Meyer's words. Touch of humor here at the old .even. The
with the suggestion that either Carella or Hawes talk to
Lutherson at the Church of the Bornless One.

Carella carried the memo to the filing cabinet, found the
Bimey case, and dropped it into the manila folder. He rem
that this Sunday. Even the hottest of cases got cold after
without a lead. This case had been cold from the beginnin
solid to pursue until this morning, when suddenly there w
the priest's life. Solid enough, Carella suspected. But o
murder? In this precinct, where looking cock-
eyed at another man's wife
could result in a pair of broken legs, a priest fucking a
very well provoke murder, yes. Perhaps even those Words a
around could incite riot.

He suspected that back in the good old days when jolly fr
tossing up the skirts of giggling peasant girls and tickl

fancies on haystacks religion wasn't taken quite as serious today. Perhaps something had been lost Over the centuries weren't supposed to be gods, maybe only God was supposed didn't God ever smile? Wouldn't perhaps find it comical to only blocks from a congregation that openly the Devil, or faithful servants was you find another way to describe it. To me, he was fucking around.

He suddenly realized that Father indiscretion which was putting it made him enormously angry.

Cherchez la femme, he thought.

But first let's go find Bobby Corrente and ask what he knew about events that took Easter Sunday.

Bobby Corrente was an even six feet tall and weighed at 180 and ninety pounds, bit of it lean, hard muscle. He had sandy colored and hazel-

colored eyes, and he bore no resemblance to his father the beanpole did to a hydrant. Carella figured his mother must be a queen. All clean good looks and charm, he rose from the seats sitting with two girls who appeared to be a year younger than fifteen, sixteen, in there.

"Nice to meet you, Detective Carella," he said and extended his hand.

They shook hands. The girls seemed more in of Bobby than visiting Open-mouthed, wide-eyed, they looked i

at this handsome young man who could talk so easily and r detective, even shake with him. When Bobby said, "Excuse the girls?" signaling that he wanted the girls to depart as q they could, Carella thought they would wet their pants in. Smiling, fumbling to their feet, bowing and scraping like in a movie about ancient China, they managed to back away tripping all over themselves, and then hurried off up the glancing back frequently at the radiant boy-emperor who had granted an audience with the local constabulary. Bobby gave a sort of shrug coupled with a boyish grin that said, What're you q you're so handsome? Carella nodded in sympathetic underst though he'd never had such a problem.

"I'm glad I found you," he said. "Few things I'd like to

"Sure, anything," Bobby said.

"From what your father told me, Nathan Hooper was here to dope on Easter Sunday, is that right?"

"Mr. Crack," Bobby said, and nodded.

"That's his street name, huh?"

"That's what they call him at the school."

"Mr. Crack."

"Yeah, the kids at the elementary school. Which is why we warned him in the neighborhood. It's enough he's at the school, we told him stay away from the and stay away live. But he came anyway."

"Why do you suppose he did that?" Carella "I still can't Bobby said, shaking head. "I think he was just looking for "Tell me what happened," Carella said.

What happened was it's two-thirty, three in the afternoon on Easter Sunday, and all the and girls are hanging around outside lives. This is 275 North Eleventh, near Italian deli. It good day, Easter, do remember? A lot of wind, very grey, it might snow. We'd all gone to church morning, well, the mass, this was Easter, we went to St. Kate's where Michael us away. But you can't him, he didn't know what was happened was a bunch of kids yelling and inside his church.

So we were, I don't know, showing off for girls, clowning remember Allie was his imitation of what was supposed to singing I Lost My Heart in San Francis, but he sounded more Lewis, did you hear Jerry Lewis sing? Man. Anyway, we making fun, you know what I Because the weather was so terrible, to be spring, supposed to be sunshine Easter, you know? So making the best And all at once, there he was.

I couldn't believe my eyes.

None of us could.

I mean, here's Mr. Crack in person, who we told at least to keep his shit out of our neighborhood and out of the school, and he comes strutting up the street like he owns

Allie stopped doing Tony Bennett, and all of us just sat him come closer and closer. He wears his hair the way the wearing it now, shaved close all over and then what looks down flowerpot on top. He's all dressed up, it's Easter Sunday coming. We're all watching him do his shuffle up the street there dumbfounded. Trying to figure out is he crazy or what big grin on his face. Big watermelon-eating grin. Here's Mr. Crack, boys and girls, here to dispense his goodies. Break out your fifty dollar bills, here's the man's going to chase all your cares away

Afternoon, ladies, he says, and nods to the girls.

As if he's Eddie Murphy, you know?

Instead of some nigger here to sell crack.

Boys, he says, how we doin'?

One of the guys, this is Jimmy Gottardi, he knew the looper personally from when they were doing this Operation Clean-Up on Fifth. What it was, the neighborhood people were cleaning out this lot that was garbage and junk and whatnot. Jimmy and some of the other block, but who weren't there that Sunday, volunteered to do the hand. So you see right off it isn't true they say happened mean, these white guys going over to a black neighborhood up an empty lot. They weren't paid for it, they were doing service. So whoever says this thing on Easter Sunday was in his mind.

Anyway, Jimmy knew Hooper from the Clean-Up thing, so he says Hey, Nate

--

His first name is Nathan, he calls himself Nate when ain't

Hey, Nate, how you doing, and on, like he's giving him the doubt, he giving him an opportunity to say he ain't h Hooper stands there grinning, Jimmy Oh so-so, man, ever'thin' cool, manknow how they go and Jimmy says What brin you here to Street, Nate, and Hooper his eyes up the street, checking know, his eyes come back all serious and hard and no smile anymore, and he says needin'?

What he means, of course, is does anybody some crack. Bec it, he's here to it. He turns to one of the girls...

"This is only what you figured, right?" said. "That he me selling crack."

"Figured, what do you mean figured? He right out and said

"I thought he only asked if..."

"No, no, that was at first. But then he turned to one of he goes, "Honey? You lookin' for some choice crack?"

This is a fifteen-year-old girl he's talking to, Laurel Perucci, she lives in my building. Fifteen years old, I don't think she what crack is, he's asking her is she looking for some crack Man. But we still didn't do anything, I mean it. He was h selling dope, but nobody got excited, nobody flew off the fact, Jimmy who worked with him on the Clean-Up, looks at him and says Come on, Nate, this ain't that kind of neighborhood, some that, letting him know this is where we live, we don't wa here, okay, cool it. And Hooper goes Oh, that right, man?

This ain't that kind of neighborhood, that right? And he again and he goes, Honey, how you like some of this sweet baby? and he's holding the vial of crack like right where you understand what I'm saying? There's like a double mea spitting in our eye.

He's saying not only is he gonna sell crack here, he's al insult, this innocent fifteen-year-old girl.

So it happened.

"What happened?" Carella asked.

"A fight started, what do you think happened?"

"Someone hit him with a baseball bat, isn't that right?"

"No, what baseball bat? There was no baseball bat. It was Easter Sunday, who was playing baseball? Where was the bat gonna come from?"

"Hooper says he got hit with a ball bat."

"Hooper's a lying bastard." "He says he got chased up the street with the baseball bats and garbage can lids."

"Sure. Because he was the one with the fuckin knife."

"He had a knife?"

"A switchblade knife. He pulled it the minute the first punch was thrown."

"Who threw the first punch?" "Me. I admit it," Bobby said.

"And you say he pulled a knife?"

"First thing he did."

"Then what?"

"One of the guys hit him from behind, the back of the head. He figured the knife was going to help him here, he'd better get out of here fast. So he began running. And we ran after him."

"To the church."

"Yeah, he ran inside St. Kate's. We chased inside, too. After Michael started we were hoodlums and all that, and got out of the church, and we tried to tell him this was crack-dealer here, he was trying to sell dope in neighborhood, he insulted one of our cops. He had knife, for Christ's sake... I admit I said that church was a fuckin' joke. It took the name of the Lord in Father Michael had a fit. What do you say?"

How dare you? Get out of here, this is God's house, all the good things are left. Some things you walk away from, you know what I mean. There are a no-win situation."

"Then what?"

"Then what what? We went home. That was it."

"Did you see anyone else in the church? While you were there?"

"No. Just Father Michael."

"Hear anyone else?"

"No."

"You didn't hear two people arguing?"

"No. What two people?"

"Is it true that you made a blood vow to get both Hooper and Father Michael? For what happened?"

"What are you talking about? What blood vow?"

"For what happened on Easter Sunday."

"I don't even know what a blood vow is. What's a blood vow?"

"You didn't swear to get them, is that right?"

"For what? Did Hooper come back to the neighbourhood since he didn't. Has he been hanging around the school peddling drugs? So what's there to get him for? We got him good enough on his own."

"And the priest? Father Michael?"

"He only did what he thought was right. He figured he was just an innocent kid getting beat up by a gang of hoodlums. I'da been there."

"That's the thing, believe me. If I thought somebody was in right? That's the thing. So why would we do anything against him? In fact, we do every Sunday since. The other guys, too. Church like a me."

us. We go to ten o'clock, mass every Sunday. We go to the C
Friday nights. We had nothing against F. Michael. In fact
one of the guys what happened on Easter. This was a terri
happened to him. A terrible thing."

"When you say he was like one of the guys..."

"He was always kidding around with us, know, telling joke
about our problems, real nice guy, I mean it, you sometin
priest. I still think he did what he did on because he mi
situation. He know the kind of person Hooper really is. I
surprised..."

Bobby stopped, shook his head.

"Yes, what?" Carella asked.

"I wouldn't be surprised if it turned out had something to
murder."

"Why do you say that?"

"A feeling, that's all."

"But what gives you that feeling?"

"I don't know. I just know that when a selling dope, anyt
happen. Including somebody. That's all I know," Bobby said
utter certainty. "That's all I know."

Willis made the call from the squadroom at a little before
afternoon. With late afternoon sunlight streaming through
he sat at his desk and direct-
dialed first 0-1-1 and then 5-4-1, and
then the number listed in his international police direct
The foreign ringing sounded somehow urgent. Across the ro
was typing up a report, pecking at the keys with the fore
hands. The squadroom was otherwise empty. The phone kept
wondered what he could possibly say if the lieutenant ask
called Buenos... "Central de Policfa," a woman's voice sa

"Hello," he said, "do you speak English?" "Perd6neme?"

"I'm calling from the United States," he said, careful no

America, they were very touchy about that down there. "Lo
Unidos," he said, "I'm a policeman, un policidt," trying
assed
Spanish, "un detective," giving it what he thought to be
Spanish pronunciation, day-tec-tee-
vay, "is there anyone there who
speaks English, please, pot favor?"

"Juss a mom'enn, please," the woman said.

He waited.

One moment, two moments, three moments, a full six American moments, which probably added up to one Argentinian moment, and then the voice came on the line.

"Teniente Vidoz, how can I be of assistance?"

"My name is Harold Willis," Willis said, "Detective/Third Grade with the 87th Squad here..

t, senor?

"We're investigating a case you might be able to help us with."

"Oh?"

Warily.

There was not a cop in the world who wanted a foreign investigation to his own already heavy case load. Foreign meant anything but his own precinct. It could be the precinct right next door, this side of the border, or very definitely foreign. Bahia Blanca, three hundred and more miles south of Buenos Aires, or Rio Gallegos, all the way down near the tip of the country. And the United States? All the way across the ocean. Don't even ask.

But here was a person who'd identified himself as a third-grade detective, which Lieutenant assumed was some sort of inferior in the Argentine, and he was investigating a case, and needed help. Help. Few cops in Buenos Aires were a nervous bunch.

"What kind of help?" Vidoz asked, hoping his voice conveyed the impression that he desired not to help in any way, manner, or form. He desired was to go to see his mistress he went home. It was a quarter to six in Argentina. This was what he desired.

"I have two names," Willis said. "I was hoping you'd be able to run them through for me."

"Run them through what?" Vidoz asked.

"Your computer. I think they may have criminal records. I'll check."

you can fax me the..."

"What sort of case is this?" Vidoz asked.

"Homicide," Willis said at once.

The secret password.

Homicide.

No cop in the world wanted to be burdened with a foreign case, neither would any cop in the world turn his back on a home case. Vidoz knew this.

Vidoz knew it. Both cops sighed heavily. Willis in mock sympathy. Days and nights of working a murder he'd just invented, Vidoz was satisfying this request was a supreme pain in the ass but nonetheless.

"What are the names?" he said.

"Ramon Castaneda and Carlos Ortega," Willis said.

"Give me your fax number," Vidoz said.

Willis gave it to him.

The information from Buenos Aires came through on the fax machine past seven that night, which made it a bit past eight down in Argentina, where Lieutenant Francisco Ricardo Vidoz was photocopying records into the and cursing over having missed the cita one Carla de Font-

Alba. In the Clerical Office at 87th Precinct, Sergeant Alfred Benjamin Mi: pulled the pages as they issued out of fax machine, remarked to his assistant Juan Portoles were in Spanish, and then that they were earmarked for "Dr. Wallace" who he guessed was Hal Willis. At the pages then altogether Portoles whistled and said, "These are some home-

He was probably referring to several words he had caught his ear, such as... Robo ... Asalto con Lesiones... Violación... especially Homicidio.

The call from Kristin Lund came as something of a surprise.

morning. On her doorstep Saturday night, when she'd point her hand for a goodnight handshake, Hawes figured that was that. But here she was now, bubbly and bright, asking if yet.

"Well, no," he said.

"Because I'm cleaning out some things here at the church, since I'm in the neighborhood anyway..." "I'd love to," he said. "I pick you up there?"

"Why don't I come by the station house?" she said. "Maybe my fingerprints again."

"Maybe," he said, and wondered why the handshake Saturday Actresses, he thought, and shook his head.

"Half an hour okay?"

"Fine," he said.

"I wasn't even sure you'd be working today," she said.

"How come?"

"Memorial Day."

"Oh. Yeah."

For cops, holidays came and went like any day.

"But I'm glad you are," she said. "See you And hung up."

He put up the receiver, and glanced at the clock. It was now a quarter of eleven. He sat for seconds staring blankly at the sunshined, grilled windows, still wondering.

A uniformed cop handed the Federal Express envelope to Carella minutes after he left the office. He explained that it had been the other shit on the muster desk and Sergeant Murchison had taken it. When he apologized for any delay this may have caused, he sounded sarcastic.

The red-and-

blue package contained the Father Michael had written to sister twelfth of May. It was written on church St. Catholic Church raised black letters across the top of the below that. Father Michael had the letter by hand, but the in! handwriting to reveal the obvious emotional had caused his heart to his older sister.

Instead, the hand was small and precise, the marching even page as if to the cadence of a secret drummer:

My dear sister, It's been a long time since you and I have meaningfully about anything, and I suppose much of this is the disparate and distant lives we lead.

Whatever the cause, I strongly miss the intensely personal talks we used to have when I was growing up, and the good gave on more than one occasion. Not the least of which, by your advice to follow my heart about the call and to enter service of our Lord, Jesus Christ.

I write this letter in the hope that I may still reveal to deepest feelings.

Irene, I'm very troubled.

I have for the past little while now, since shortly before matter of fact, been entertaining the most serious doubts ability to love God and to serve Him as devoutly as I've now have reached the point where I feel incapable of facing congregation on Sunday, of hearing confessions, of leading people in our youth organization, of counseling those in spiritual guidance in short, of fulfilling the duties of the priesthood.

My self-

loathing reached its highest peak Easter Sunday, when I failed to extricate me from a situation that had become all-. and I realized then that I caught in the Devil's own snare and threat not only to myself and the lambs flock, but also to

I don't know what to do, Irene. Help Please.

Your loving brother, Michael Carella read the letter yet and he looked at the opening paragraph of Irene's letter

My dearest brother, I am now in receipt of yours of May 12th. I tell you with what a saddened haste I hasten to respond. Michael, how did you manage to construct such a tower of doubt in yourself? And you should your fears to the bishop of your diocese? I do not counsel or advise you.

This from a sister who, in the days of Birney's youth, had given "good advice on more than one occasion." To Carella, her letter was a brush-

off. Don't tell me your troubles, I'm on my way to Japan. I'll call you before I leave, we'll have a nice chat. By then, the skies again, anyway. Besides, I know you'll be able to find enlightenment and salvation. Poor tormented son of a bitch. An affair with someone, as it later turns out, but she can't see. Eyes all full of tears at the funeral yesterday. Carella

And then he went to the Clerical Office, and made a copy of Michael's letter, and used a yellow highlighter to mark the sentences that he thought might prove helpful to the case.

I have for the past little while now, since shortly before the matter of fact... The affair, then, had started "shortly

"Shortly" being a relative term, it could have begun two weeks, Easter or two weeks or even two months. In any case, he had been a long time now." His exact words were

"For the past little while." Go pinpoint that.

My self-loathing reached its highest peak on Easter Sunday. Easter Sunday again. The day Nathan Hooper had sought sanctuary in church. The day he'd heard Father Michael arguing with another priest. The day the priest had heatedly thrown Bobby Corrente and

... when I failed to extricate myself from a situation that had become all-consuming and debilitating.

Was he referring here to the argument he'd had with this unseemly man? Had they been arguing about the affair... ... that had become all-consuming and debilitating?

What had this man been telling him when he burst into the room, dripping blood and chased by an angry mob?

I realized then that I was caught in the own snare... The snare, Carella thought, wondered what the priest had meant.

"What were you cleaning out at the Hawes asked.

"Oh, just some things in my desk. The who's replacing Father bringing his secretary with him."

"Father Oriella? I thought he was temporary."

"Well, apparently not," Krissie said, and tossed hair the did. Hawes guessed there acting classes where they taught your hair. I'll be looking for something else ,w. Unless along," she said, and ged.

On Saturday night, she had told him honestly and y that s doubted a part would .ver come along. But apparently hope was Monday, and she was singing the ;ss's same sad song a will come And when it comes along, I'll be up for it. if was because they were looking for who was taller. Or shor blonder. Or Actresses, he thought, and wondered what hell here.

They were eating in a new Italian restaurant on In this c sprang up like s (or, in some cases, toadstools) and most Italian, the American craze for seemingly knowing no limit restaurants survived. Most of them went under after strug or three months. Krissie had ordered the veal piccata. Ha the cannelloni. Judging from the taste of the sauce, he g two or three weeks.

"Would it bother you if I talked about the case?" asked.

This morning, Carella had filled him in on what learned a yesterday. The priest having an affair. Hawes had listened guessed the news bothered him, but he didn't quite why.

"Go right ahead," Krissie said.

"I was wondering.., did Father Michael discuss personal m you?"

"Like what?"

"Well... personal matters."

"Like which dentist he should go to? Or whe or not he cou
car?"

"No, I was thinking more of... doubts... "No. Never."

"Did you ever open his mail? Or answer telephone?"

"Yes, of course. All the time."

"Were there ever any letters or calls from.. hesitated and
Go ahead, bite the "Were there ever any letters or calls
of course," she said.

"Any women in particular?"

"I don't know what you mean," she said.

"Any women who wrote or called more than.., well.., might
appropriate."

"I still don't know what you're saying." "Well..." he said
hesitated. "We to believe that Father Michael may have in
something he didn't know ht handle. Something that was ca
distress you know of anything like that, you'd be helping

"No, I don't know of anything that was troubling "she said

"Never mentioned any problems or..."

"Never," "And these women who called or wrote..."

"Different women. Women in the parish mostly," she said.

"Would you remember their names?"

"Not offhand. But any letters would be in the file..."

"Yes, I saw them."

"... and I kept a log of all telephone calls --

unless the new secretary's already thrown it out."

"Where would it have been?"

"On my desk. To the right of the phone."

"A book, a pad...?"

"One of those printed message pads. Pink. While You Were
And then a space for the message and the caller's name and

"These women who called.., did any of them ever

visit Father Michael?"

"Visit him?"

"Yes. Come to the church. To see him. To talk to "There was
came to the office, yes," Krissie said, and looked at him
she said, "I get the feeling you're.., well.., never mind
wrong."

"Maybe you're right," he said. "What are you thinking?"

"That... well.., from the questions asking.., well, you sound
suggesting that Michael was.., well..."

" r &, so "Do you think that might have been the "No."

"You sound very positive."

"I think Father Michael was wholly God and to the Catholics
doubt if he noticed women as such. Or thought of them way

"In what way?"

"A sexual way. He was very good-
looking," know.., well, you saw him..."

Hawes had seen a corpse.

Someone repeatedly stabbed and slashed. "... all the little
were crazy those classic black-
Irish looks, that Gene smile..."

The body on the stone floor of the garden been smiling.

They had caught a homicide, period.

The victim was a white male in his early

dark hair, dark eyes.

Good-looking?

Hawes could not remember.

"... is what I'm saying. He was sensitive marvelously and these are traits women naturally find appealing. But he was. And as such, he couldn't dwell on... • matters of the flesh. He didn't think of himself as being attractive to women. And he .. couldn't allow himself to be attracted to them."

"His sister thinks otherwise," Hawes said.

"Oh?" Krissie said.

"She seems positive her brother was having an affair with

"Someone in the parish?"

"He didn't say, and she doesn't know."

"I'm surprised," Krissie said. "Really."

"You never saw any indication that he might have..."

"Not the slightest."

"Even though there were calls and letters..."

"Well, from men too."

"And visits..."

"Yes, from both men and women. St. Catherine's is a busy parish. The pastor was a responsive pastor. I remember how surprised I was when I began working there, the number of people he found time to

energy was... well... amazing. I don't think the man ever really."

"This was when?"

"When I started the job? The beginning of March, it was s
remember. I walked from the Subway stop to the church..."

... and had trouble finding the entrance. You Come in on
Avenue side, you know, well, you've been there. The church
like a all churches are, with the central portal altar. T
St. Catherine's is on the we side of the church, you come
arched door, and you go through the sacristy then into a
paneled

corridor and into rectory. Father Michael's office is in
was a part of the kitchen. In fact, there us be a wood-
burning stove

where the filing now are, against the southern wall.

It's funny, but Krissie feels as if she's auditioning for

Maybe because there's another girl in the when she arrive
theater to try something, there're always a hundred other
theater, of course, you call anyone the age of thirty a g
girl in Michael's office on that blustery March really is
thirteen years old if that, jeans and a grey sweatshirt,
rubber boots, her long dark hair spilling down over her a
over the desk. He is saying, "You put in the ticket price
turns out discussing a big church dance that won't take t
beginning of June, and the beautiful little girl has desi
for it, and brought it for Father Michael to look at. "Wh
he says to Krissie, lifting the poster off the and showing

She hasn't even told him who she is yet, said she's here
part-

time secretarial b, but immediately he's getting her invo
matters. She looks at the poster, which shows lot of your
boys dancing, and features fat black music notes floating
over eir heads, and balloon-

type lettering that ounces The June Hop, to
take place at St. "fine's Hall on Friday night, the first
only the beginning of March, but Father ;hael likes to ge
people involved long advance of any planned event. "So?"
her... "He really did have a Gene Kelly smile..."

... and waits for her answer as if the entire future

the Catholic Church depends upon it. The little girl-
she's not truly

little, she is in fact five feet six tall, but to Krissie
little girl, , thirteen, whatever is also waiting for her
critics, critics everywhere. This is a first-
night opening up here on
North Eleventh Street, they're waiting for the reviewer
to express an opinion. Gloria, he'd called her Gloria, is
little girl, with a pale oval face and high bones, long b
falling clean and to her shoulders, lips slightly parted,
opened wide in anticipation.

Krissie feels a sudden empathy for the girl, who sly drew
who is now yearning y for the priest's approval, which ma
upon what Krissie has to say about her effort. Krissie kn
like to be however, and she also knows what a "sell" can
and so she expresses the that the poster really makes a p
here and dance, at which point Gloria "Yippee!" or someth
adolescent throws her arms around Krissie and gives her a

Krissie is here for a job, remember. And beginning to thi
such a dignified impression, a teenager jumping up and do
yelling when she hasn't even introduced herself. So she l
Father Mi telling the girl that the poster is terrific ex
she forgot to put in, and the girl is excited by Krissie's
and the terrific Gene Kelly grin of approval and his Let'
contagion that she's wetting her pants there in the offic
up the poster and thanks Krissie again leaves the office
happiness and The handsome young priest shakes his head s
says something about the kids in this parish, and finally
introduce herself and to tell him she's here job. And do
he says?

"He says, "Can you start today?' Just like Krissie said,
head. "I guess he what happened there with Gloria, the wa
Gloria who, by the way, is a president of the C.Y.O., bri
and tiful besides." "I know," Hawes said, "Carella told m

"The point is... well..., he was a fine, decent man, Look,
his sister, I can't say she's telling the truth or not. E
he was..., involved with some woman... I mean, find that h

That he was having an affair with some woman... I mean, I guess we were sexually involved, didn't she?" "Yes, he told her he had sworn off of haste."

"With some woman." "Yes. A woman he said he loved."

Krissie shook her head sadly.

"What a pity," she said. "That he couldn't work it out. I know that he loved this woman, and to work it out." "Yes," Hawes said.

Memorial day.

Just what Marilyn needed.

A national holiday.

The banks closed, her stockbroker's office closed, and the Argentineans expecting answers at three-thirty this afternoon. She looked at her watch.

Five minutes past two. And ticking.

One of the men she'd known before she started Willis was named Charles Ingersoll Endicott, Jr., a man in his late thirties as a holdover from his prep school nickname "Chip". as if he had burdens. She dialed his number now and wasn't out on the weekend; sailing Chip's passion. The phone rang four times before he picked up when ... "Hello?" "Chip?" she said. "It's me."

She had not spoken to him in months and wondered suddenly, and with a sense of whether he would even remember her. And his voice, on the line, deep and welcoming "Marilyn, my God, how are you and how is she?" once the good friend whom she'd shared so many wonderful moments with where good friends and good men were "I'm fine, Chip, how are you?" hope interrupting anything," remembering his handsome face and intelligent brown eyes, a little thirty-one years older than she was, the father never known perhaps "Is something wrong?" he asked.

"No, no," she said, "I was just thinking about you and..."

She could not lie to him. He'd been too good a friend, and she had

still a friend now. either way, she could not lie to someone so much to her.

"I need advice," she said.

"Legal advice?"

"Not quite."

"Okay," he said, but now he sounded puzzled.

"Chip... what do you think I could get for a cond mortgage?"

"Why? What's the trouble?"

"No trouble. I need some money, is all."

"How much money?"

"A lot. I wouldn't be bothering you with this, but the bank today, and this is somewhat "nt."

"You're alarming me, Marilyn."

"I don't mean to. I'm simply trying to get an estimate..."

"How much did the house cost?"

All business now.

"Seven-fifty."

"How much is the present mortgage?"

"Five hundred."

"You could expect something like a hundred and thirty-five thousand.

That would be about eighty percent of the value."

"How long would it take to get it?" she asked.

"Usually a full month. How soon do you need it?" "Yesterday."

"Marilyn, I don't want to know what this is, truly.

But if you need money, you don't have to go to a bank. I
however much you want."

"Thank you, Chip, but..."

"I'm serious."

"Have got two million bucks lying aro you she asked, and
amazing that she coul't smile.

There was a silence on the line.

"What is it?" he said.

"An old debt came up."

"Gambling?"

"No."

"Then what?"

"A former time, a former life."

"Something you'd like to talk about?"

"No, Chip, I don't think so." "I can go to five hundred t
said."

me back whenever you can."

"Chip..."

"No interest, no strings."

"I couldn't."

"You'll never know how much you meant to n he said. "Come
tomorrow, I'll arranj transfer of funds."

"I can't, Chip. But thank you, anyway."

"If you change your mind..."

"I don't think I will."

"We were such good friends," he said sudden his voice catch

"Yes," she said.

"I miss you, Marilyn." "I miss you, too," she said, and meant it.

"Marilyn, I'm serious," he said. "If you want call me. I am I. Call me, you? I'd like to talk to you every now and permitted, isn't it?"

"It is, Chip." "Good," he said. "Stay well, darling," and lowered the receiver gently onto its cradle.

Her stockbroker was a man named Hadley Fields, there was calling him at the office and she did not have his home number. The file cabinets in the study on the second floor of the house, the file marked "TOCKS (she believed in generic labeling) contained the most recent statements. A glance at the last in the Monthly column showed that as of the last quarterly statement on 12/31/72 assets her account totaled \$496,394. Of this total, \$443,000 was invested in equities, and the remainder was a cash equivalent. More than \$50,000 invested in what was called a short term note paying 8.6% interest. She began going down the list of stocks

500 Abbott Laboratories, bought in June two years ago at \$22.50 a share for a total cost of \$22,793. Now worth \$54.75 per share, up almost \$5000...

300 Walt Disney Co, bought at \$57.00 a share in April two years ago worth \$78.50 a share for a total increase of \$6,270... 500 Thiokol Inc, bought in February of last year at \$40.625 per share, sellin \$44.375 for a total gain of \$1,657... There were 1

1,000 Republic New York Corp purchase, \$46,058 a year ago, now worth \$44. for a loss of \$1,308... 500 Sprague Techno Purchased \$7872, now worth \$5812 for a loss of a bit more

... but overall, the investments she'd made coming to this point had increased in value by more than \$60,000. Hadley Fields had been

for her; she would not be selling at a loss. that it made difference. The proceeds would be going to her. They would Argentina.

Tomorrow morning, she would call Hadley advise him to sell she owned and to a wire transfer of the proceeds to her bank she had to place another call to Russell.

The man Willis spoke to at the Identification Secfi office Day afternoon was fluent/ Spanish, having been born of parents their way to the city from Puerto Rico back in days when the island were called Marine Tigers. This was because the ship that carried them to mainland America was called Tiger, Harold Miguel Florentino was called Mike by the rest of the staff so to call him Mike now. This was nice of in that sergeants outranked even detectives. Willis was but a mere third.

Morente looked over the records that had been by Vidoz, and the one named as Ortega was perhaps the ugliest human being he'd seen in his life (but perhaps it was a bad and then reeled off Willis all the crimes as and Castaneda had committed in the last twelve years. Willis, who'd already been lied in by Portia politely but patiently. The list of crimes --

Assault and Battery, Armed
Robbery, Rape, Homicide and such

only raised his anxiety level. These were the people Maria dealt with. These were the ones who wanted money from her.

"What I'm really interested in, Mike," he said politely, "is not we've got anything on them here."

"In this city, do you mean?" "Or even in this country," Willis asked.

"These are common names," Morente said. "In Spanish. Very common. Castaneda? Ortega? Very common. If you'd of given me some names like Hoyas de Carranza, or Palomar de las Heras, or..."

"Yes, but these are their names," Willis said.

"Oh, sure. I'm only saying. The computer's gonna have a list of names. You're gonna have four thousand Ortegas the first time you look and see."

There were in fact only eighty-three list Ortega, Carlos, in the citywide Felony file, and forty-seven for Castaneda, Ramon. with the records from Buenos Aires, Morente knew the birth dates of also had information concerning height, color of hair, color of scars, tattoos and which he punched into the computer as odds had to be what, ten one? he came up with records for Ortega who had been born on the day and who seemed to be the Ortega who'd presumably followed Marilyn Argentina. The Ramon Castanedas pedigrees matched the handsome one in the call B.A., ask them to Fed Ex good set of prints," Morente I you right off, we're not gonna get a match fax, no way.

"Any other way we can zero in?"

"Well, unless you're looking in prisons, you count this of Morente said. "He's five-and-dime at Castleview."

"How about the other one?"

"Carlos Ortega," Morente read out loud computer screen, and to the faxed and said, "Carlos Ortega," and then kept head to paper, like a spectator w tennis match, comparing records the hits out loud, "forty-two years old, born October fifteenth," and said in an aside to Willis "Birth date of great men" but amplify, "six feet three inches tall, two hundred and sixty-five pounds, brown eyes, bald with black sideburns, this is some kind of broken nose, knife scar over the right eye, they sound like your guy was born in Argentina and this guy in El Salvador"

"How do their prison records match?"

"The only time your guy was out of jail, this guy was in."

"So they could be one and the same."

"If you conveniently forget El Salvador."

"That could be a clerical error."

"Sure, anything could be a clerical error."

"How long has your guy been in America?"

Willis asked.

"Two years," Morente said, looking at the screen, and then he studied the faxed record. "Just about when your guy got out."

"Why was your guy put away?"

"Dope."

"Where is he now?"

"Out. Naturally."

"Anything in my guy's record about dope?"

"Nothing. But here's his whole family history."

His uncle was a pimp, a guy named Alberto Hidalgo, got his start picking pockets when he was still a little..." "A guy named..." Willis said, and read for the fax. "Don't tear the fucking paper." Morente said "Where does it say that?"

"Right here. That's what this means in Spanish: Living Off the Body of a Dead Man. Take a look at He's dead."

"Ortega?"

"No, the uncle."

Willis caught his breath. "Hidalgo. Got killed a few years ago. Cyanide."

"Do they... do they know who did it?" asked.

"Doesn't say. This is Ortega's record, uncle's." "His uncle..." Willis said softly.

"Yeah. Is exactly what I said."

Willis was silent for several moments.

said, "When did your guy get out of jail?"

"October."

"Then it's at least possible."

"That they're one and the same person? sure," Morente said. "I wouldn't wanna bet farm on it."

"Have you got an address for him?" Willis asked ***

It was the ugly one who called her at three-thirty sharp.

Like the handsome one, he spoke only a little

harshly. There was in his voice a scarcely contained anger that he was forced to be civilized. She was that he would never forget the hurt she had caused him to suffer. She knew that once she was over the moon, he would seek revenge, he would kill her. She did not yet know if she would deal with that. One step at a time, she told herself. His voice was chilling.

"Do you have the money yet?" he asked.

"I forgot that today was a holiday," she said.

"Everything's closed." "When will you have it?" he asked.

"I'm sure I can get the five hundred tomorrow," she said. "I have to see what..." "That is not two million," he said.

His voice was low. She felt he'd wanted to shout the words but they came out softly, and were all the more terrifying: Two million.

Almost a whisper. That is not two million.

"I realize that," she said. "But you know, you're the one who sells cocaine..."

"Ustedes fueron los que sugirieron la cocaína..."

St. "So I was wondering... I'm sure you have contacts..."

INO.

"Because it would be so much simpler if I turned..."

"No."

"... over the five hundred..."

"No, that is not satisfactory."

"... and then you could handle the business of.

"No. Five hundred is not two million."

"Of course not. But I'm sure you understand..

Trying to appeal to his sense of fairness justice... "... it is for a woman to handle a trans..."

"You should have thought of that before killed my uncle." said.

"Nada," he said.

"No, what did you... ?"

"When will you have the two million?" he Had he said his that son of a uncle? Was that what this was all about? A here? We'd like the two mill, sure, but there's also this Uncle Famous Pimp Hidalgo.

"I'm still trying to make contact with she said, "I told holiday. But this is I'm suggesting. Once I set the deal your friend...?"

"Are you dense?"

The word in Spanish was pesada. "thickheaded" or "obstinate".

"We suggested cocaine as a way out of problem. But the problem was not ours. don't want to become involved in anything She said laughing.

"Do you understand what I'm telling you?" he id.

She understood perfectly. He didn't want to run my risks.
debtor, let her come up with e scratch.

"What if five hundred is all I can raise?" she said.

"You said you've already made contact with..." "No, I said
to..."

"Then do what you have to do, and do it quickly!"

"I'm not in the habit of buying and selling dope.

"Miss?"

Only the single word.

Sehorita?

Loaded. About to explode.

"When will you have the money?"

Back to the point. No more bullshit. We're not interested
five hundred and investing it dope or in hogbellies. The
aspect of this deal is time. When will you have the money

"I don't know yet. If I can buy the stuff.., look, I simply
I've been trying to reach this "When will you know?"

"That's just it. Until I..."

"When?"

"If you could let me have till the end of the Week..."

"No."

"Please. I'm trying to work this out, I really I could have
Friday..."

"Tomorrow."

"I can't promise anything by tomorr..."

"Then Wednesday."

"Can you make it Thursday?" she "Please?" Groveling to the bitch. okay?" "No later," he said, and hung up.

Today, citizens all over America had lined sidewalks of cities and towns, large and small watched the parades honoring their veterans. Today, veterans of all ages had about their infantry platoons, squadrons or their minesweepers or their drops. This was a day set pay tribute to the dead. A day, also, that signaled the beginning of summer. The swimming pools outdoor tennis courts had been opened. America today, and all over America today promise of summer was large. For this twenty-eighth of May, and June was only four off and ready to bust out, summer was on the summer was in essence May Day.

The town was full of tourists.

This was Memorial Day, this was the start, beginning of summer time when "cans dredged up memories not of warfare and, of summers past.., the summer of a kiss, the summer of a loss, summer all lights went out, the summer of distant music, yellow dresses, summer after summer floating past in hot air was Memorial Day. The tourists came to the city not to either live or dead summers.

came to celebrate the start of a season of corn the cob and lobsters, gin and tonic, beer with foam. Summertime. High school-looking women.

Carella had read over his own reports on the Hooper and C... interviews, and there was no question but that the two were in contradiction. It seemed to him that a third might be valuable had gone to the Hooper apartment specifically to talk to

Her mother told him where he could find her. Her mother cleaned people's houses and offices for a living. Got down on her knees to scrub floors. Her daughter got down on her hands to perform quite a different service.

Carella had not realized the girl was a hooker. That was shock.

"Arrest her," Mrs. Hooper told him. "On'y way she goan le

The second shock was actually seeing her.

He found her all the way downtown, standing Under the mar theater playing a pair of triple-X-rated porn flicks. She was we purple satin mini and a lavender satin blouse. beads on her neck in her High-heeled purple leather pumps to match the. and blouse. One hand on her hip, the other cl a small purple leather purs to air as strange men turned to look her over, words. She twenty-seven. She was "Want a date?" she asked Carella, and kis he approached, and then recognized him started to turn aw realized it was too late anyplace, and stopped dead still "Whut's this?" she said.

"Few questions," he said.

"You goan bust me?"

"Should I?"

"No crime to stan' outside a movie show said.

"I agree," he said. "Can I buy you a coffee?" "I'd p'fer cream," she said.

They found an ice cream shop with tables in back. At the fresh-faced black red-and-blue uniforms served up sugar cones and earned seven bucks an hour. table near the window, Carella watch eating a banana split with chocolate sauce, whipped cream maraschino cherry, listened to her telling him that the counter were assholes.

"They cud make two hunn' id an hour," she said, was to ge

He figured she was talking fifty dollars a trick.

"I want to know what happened on Easter Sunday," he said.

"Nate tole you whut happen," Seronia said.

"I want to hear what he told you."

"Same as he tole you."

"I don't think so."

"Look, man, whutchoo want fum me? Nate tole you the story go 'rest them cocksuckers busted his head?"

"Did your brother have a knife?"

"No. Who tole you he had a knife?"

"Did he go to Eleventh Street to sell crack?"

"Oh, man, doan make me laugh."

"Is his street name Mr. Crack?"

"Where you hear all this shit, man?"

"Somebody's lying, Seronia. Either your brother or a kid Corrente, who..."

"Oh, that sum 'bitch."

"You know him?"

"I know him, all right. Was him swung the fust bat, you a that what your brother told you?"

"He tole me same as he tole you."

"He didn't tell me it was Bobby Corrente who Swung the fi the way he told it, the boys Who attacked him were strang

"Then they was."

"But you know Corrente, huh?"

Silence.

"Seronia? How come you know Corrente?"

"I seen him aroun' is all."

"Where?"

"Aroun' ."

"What are you hiding?"

"Nuthin'. You know Corren'ee, you go 'rest He the one bro head."

"How do you know that?"

"Jus' a guess is all."

"Is that what your brother told you? That swung the first

"You go ass Nate."

"I'm asking you."

"I got no more time to waste here," Seronia and wiped her paper napkin and preparing to get up from the table when you like to waste some uptown?"

He felt no guilt whatever throwing muscle thirteen-year-old hooker.

"Waiting for the wagon to take you to Booking," he said, point home.

"Oh whut charge?" Seronia asked, su confident. "Anyway, m out in half hour."

"Good. Let's go then. I'm sure he'll love bail."

"You think you bluffin' me?"

"Nope, I think I'm running you in on a Two-Thirty."

"Nobody offered you no sexual conduct, man."

"That's your word against mine," he said, and stood up. "

"Sit down," she said, "you makin' a fuss here."

"Are we gonna talk about Easter Sunday or not?"

"They both lyin'" she said.

This is not Rashomon not quite.

The movie Rashomon, as Carella remembers it, was not about
It was about people sharing a single event but perceiving
and differently, so that each time the event was related,
significantly. Listening to Seronia now, sitting with a
thirteen-year-

old hooker in an ice cream shop while she dug into her
second banana split, aware that men thirty and forty years
she is are eyeing her through the plate-
glass window fronting the
street, Carella begins wondering whether this version of
Seronia's version as related to her by Nate shortly after
occurred, is in fact the true version.

Or is she lying as well?

In the game of Murder, only the murderer is allowed to lie
other players must tell the truth.

But this is not the game of Murder, this is the death -
of a human being
who also happened to be a priest, and it appears now as if
lying, if only what happened on Easter Sunday. And yet, the
where all three stories coincide" that it becomes increasingly
difficult who exactly was lying ... or is lying about aspects
Eleventh Street happening.

Seronia admits, for example, that her brother's street name is,
Crack, and that he's been known to hang around the elementary
enticing the little kiddies to try of crack, a nickel a box
not big kids who are ten, eleven years old. In this perhaps
American city, kids are more often indulging in acts once
reserved for adults. Seronia tells Carella presumably her

makes her an the subject that in the past three years, se
boys in the twelve-to year-
old age bracket went up only percent, whereas
sex crimes committed by under the age of twelve increased
percent. Moreover, since the rapist usually someone weaker
the female these new-
age sex criminals ranged in age years old to seven.
In fact, Seronia feels she is a public service by engaging
rapists who might otherwise be chasing teeny girls in the

But that is neither here nor there.

The point is that her brother, yes, is a dealer, But this
him a bad person. him a businessman filling a need in the
businesswoman at thirteen, she rinks of herself as a woman
"considering her occupation -
filling a similar need in a different but
possibly related community. All of this communicated to C
English that is not quite Black English, but neither is i
Own.

And on Easter Sunday, as happened on every Sunday, rain o
Christmas, Yom Kippur or Ramadan, Nathan Hooper goes up t
Street not to sell crack to the young wops gathered on th
and freezing their asses off in their Easter finery, but
crack from his supplier, young Bobby Corrente... "Are you
up?" Carella asked.

"Do I soun' like I'm makin' it up, man?"

She did not sound like she was making it up.

"Bobby discounts it 'cause of the volume," she said. "Fig

... you can buy a vial of crack for five bucks, but you've
hustling customers and that takes time and energy. Bobby
Nate for four bucks a vial, but he does a hundred vials i
and goes home with four bills without having to run all o
makes a buck on each vial he sells, so on the initial inv
four, he Comes away with an additional hundred, which is
five
percent return on the dollar, much better than you can do
Street.

On this particular Sunday in question, which happens to be Sunday, Nate goes uptown three big ones in his pocket plus twenties, intending to buy his usual hundred crack from his dealer, Mr. Robert Vi Corrente, in case you didn't know him. Something happens that changes the complexion of the deal. What happens is that hands over the money, and is reaching for the vials of crack in it, same way business each and every

"An' by the way, this wun't on the front broad daylight, silly wop girls an' watchin'. This is in the hallway."

where Nate is reaching for the plastic when Bobby tells him to disappear, vanish, get nigger, words to that effect. Nate knows Bobby once, of course, but he pretends ignorance and Bobby spells it out for him. What it is (Oh, man, got to be kiddin' me, Nate goes on), when Nate made his usual buy, he paid for the with funny money you makin' a man, I mean it) and so this Sunday, Bobby is giving him bills, but he ain't giving Nate no dope he's telling Nate to shove his bt his ass, he doesn't like doing business someplace for merchandise with printed in the cellar.

Hey, no, man, come on, man, Nate is going, he knows Bobby is to rights, and figures this is the end of this relationship. He looks for a supplier somewhere else. But you buy dope with cash. Bobby has the four in his pocket already, and the only thing resembling convertible cash around here is the plastic bag of crack. A hundred vials of it. So, since the relationship is done with, anyway, and since Nate is a very fast runner with a sense of rhythm... "He grabs for the bag," Carella said.

"Is jus' whut he done," Seronia said.

... and starts running like hell, planning to get off I. and stay off it till things cool down.

Bobby Corrente wants to find him, let him come onto black. Everybody got rhythm, man, and where your life ain't worth you start up with a brother. Which is just about when Bobby hits the back of the head with a baseball bat.

The blow sends Nate flying forward, he almost loses his grip on the bag of crack, but he keeps running, knowing he ain't gonna make it now, knowing he's bleeding too bad to make it back home, so he has to quit now, not with these hundred vials of crack in his

of a sudden he spots the church up ahead.

He tries the door, and it's unlocked. He runs into the church, turns the door behind him, twists this big brass key that's stuck in the heavy lock, and he hears the cops outside, charging up the steps and he figures first thing he has to do is stash the dope. The dope is what this is all about, the reason he has a broken key and a broken door. And they're pounding on the door with their bats, trying to break themselves against the door, and they've even got something like a battering ram, Nate doesn't know. All he has to do is get out of there, give, and he's got to hide his dope.

And then he hears somebody arguing in the church, and he realizes he's got to hide that dope before whoever's coming out or before that door in, which it takes about three seconds to open a hundred vials.

"Where?" Carella said.

"I got no idea," Seronia said.

"But in the church someplace."

"In the church someplace," she said. "Do you think that's funny, turnin' the church stash pad?" "Yes, very funny," Carella said. "That's the J of the story?"

"The rest is like he told you. The priest comes yellin' and an' somebody calls the cops then everybody goes home and he takes to the hospital where they wrap his head in bandages. End of story."

Not quite, Carella thought.

"You mine if I go now?" Seronia said. "I live to make."

Frank Oriella was a man in his early sixties, 'd been born in the Catholic Church when Masses were still said in Latin, fish and fowl, and it was mandatory to go to confession taking holy communion. Nowadays, he was influenced by the ecumenical changes that had come. He'd become a priest. He had only one week, for example, to attend service in church in Calm's Point, where presumably to take his way to Heaven the pastor had played a guitar and had sounded like a pop song. This was in a Catholic little church down south under a tin roof. This was a big, substantial

Catholic church! With a priest who played the guitar and Oriella still shook his head in wonder at the memory.

That Tuesday afternoon, when Carella and Hawes arrived at was shaking his head and trying to put together a new office had once been occupied by Father Michael. a small church neighborhood. The here at St. Catherine's was more a cottage. Fashioned of stone that echoed the fl the adjoining garden of two small kitchen, and an even smaller office, the church for which was long hall connected the rectory to the church. Uptown Father Michael had enjoyed of a rather more opulent

His secretary of thirty years, a woman Marcella Palumbo, spoke English and in Italian, was busily unpacking cardboard files which Father transferred to the open drawers of green. Both Oriella and Marcella had white hair and they were both well. Looking much like civilized penguins, they bobbed about the the priest complaining was inhuman to transfer a man from served for more than forty years, his clucking her tongue while she box after box of files. It occurred to Carella that unloading pertained to previous parish and would be of little perhaps he'd carted them along for reasons.

"I can understand the bishop's thinking," he this does not decision any more for me."

His accent was not basso profundo buffone; he not sound like immigrant. Rather, the tones and cadences of his speech were careful, studied, somewhat formal. In contrast, she spoke with Neapolitan accent that her presence on these shores for the

"The bishop surmises," Oriella said, "that after a such a will take an older, more experienced priest to pull the parish again.

mine to question. But have they given any consideration to my old parish will There are people at St. John the Martyr worshipping there since I first became a priest. That was two years ago. Some of these people are eighty, ninety years old. How react to such a change? To a new priest?" "Vergogna, vergogna," said, shaking her head and tackling yet another carton.

"It might have been wiser," Oriella said, "to send the new

priest here, instead of to St. John's. This parish has all
a shock.

Now there will be two shocks to overcome, one here and another
there." "Sure, what do they know?" Marcella said.

It sounded like "Shoo, wottaday nose?"

"Marcella Bella here," he said, pleased when she waved away
playfully flattering nickname, "started working for me when I was
clean and it wasn't worth your life to travel after ten or twelve
difficult time convinced her to accompany me here. She lives in
a few blocks from St. John's. The difficult one for a woman in
the neighborhood, with all due respect for what people do, in
the world, is it?"

"No, not the very best," Hawes admitted.

"But complaining about the pasture isn't mend the fences,"
said. "These files accumulation of a lifetime, my sermons
priests all over the world, articles on Jesus Catholic Church
of inspirational anything pertaining to the spiritual life
behind at St. John's would have been leaving my own children

"Vergogna, vergogna," Marcella said again.

Hawes did not know what she was saying, gathered from the
her tongue shaking of her head that she was not happy Father
transfer here. Marcella knew was saying, "Shame, shame," and the
stupidity of the diocese in transferring the secretary, the
whole damn thing. She not going to like this place. She knew
minute they'd walked into a rectory half the the one at St. John's
what kind of could an Irish be? Martha Whatever, eh? This
care of an Italian priest? Or so Marcella said it. Vergogna.

"Actually, we'll have some more files for you in a little while,"
said.

"Oh?" Oriella said.

"Cosa ?" Marcella asked.

"More files," the priest said, and then, in Italian, "And
and in English again, "What files?"

"Father Michael's. We're almost finished with them." "Thank you to you," Hawes said. "For the receipts, records of payments."

"Remind me to call the bishop," Oriella said, snapping her fingers and turning to Marcella. "I have to ask him whether I should close St. John's account and start a new one here, or whether I should keep it and I can simply use the old accounts."

He turned back to the detectives and said, "They sent a young man straight out of the seminary, he's twenty-four years old, Daniel Robles, a Puerto Rican. He's going to be dealing with octogenarian parishioners. Young Daniel, he's going to be stepping into a lion's den."

Marcella burst out laughing.

"I should have left you there to help him out," Oriella said to Marcella.

"Hey, sure," Marcella said.

It sounded like "Ay, shoo."

"The reason we came by," Oriella said, "is we'd like to close the church, if that's with you."

"A search?" "Cosa?" Marcella asked.

"Una ricerca," Oriella said. "But a se what?"

"Narcotics," Hawes said.

"Here?" Oriella said.

It was unthinkable that there would be here inside the church a man like Devil would be preaching next Sunday's mass single word. He expressed not only disbelief but revulsion as well. Here?

Dope? Here?

"If the story we have is reliable," Hawes said to Marcella, who had not understood the word, was already shaking her head again.

"So we'd like to look around," Carella said if we come up
If there is dope the church, if dope is somehow involved
let's say that might change things."

"Of course," Oriella said, and shrugged as say This is en
preposterous, dope church, but if you wish to look for it
I am but a mere devoted servant of transferred from my be
uptown to insufferable part of the city.

"We'll try not to get in your way," Hwes said "Is Mrs. He
Carella asked. thought she might show us around."

"She's in the kitchen," Marcella said.

It sounded like "She's inna kitch." I'll buzz her," Oriell
went to his desk.

a button on the base of his phone, he waited, then said,
could you come in, ..ase?" Marcella scowled. "Thank you,"
put the phone back on the cradle. "She'll be right here,"
just then Alexis the autiful little blonde girl with the
eyes and the solemn air ... appeared in the doorway o the
"Excuse me," and then recognized arella.

"Hello, Mr. Carella," she said, "I'm Alexis "Donnell, we

last "Yes, I remember," Carella said. "How are you?" |
"Fine, thanks,"
she said, and hesitated, and then asked, "Have you learne
yet?"

.. "Few things," he said.

Alexis nodded, her brown eyes thoughtful, her face bearing
sorrowful expression that had preceded tears last Saturday
wearing a blue blazer with a gold embroidered school cress
breast pocket, pleated green plaid skirt, blue knee-
high socks, brown
walking shoes; Carella figured she had come here directly
She turned to Oriella and said, "I hope I'm not

interrupting anything, Father..." "Not at all," Oriella s

"But we're not sure..., the kids in the C.Y.O... We're not

should do about Friday night's dance." She turned to Carella. "The big dance we have every year at the be of June. We've been doing it for a long then, to Father Oriella again, "We Friday's re but we don't know we're supposed to do now. We don't want to be disrespectful to Father Michael's But Gloria has the check from Michael and she doesn't know whether to give it to He not to He Friday night."

"Kenny?" Father Oriella said.

"Kenny Walsh," she said. "He's leader Wanderers, the band. He's supposed to asked for a hundred-dollar deposit, and

Michael gave Gloria the check, but now we :. KNOW."

Oriella said, "Mmm," and thought about problem for what she had time.

asked, "Was Father Michael involved in planning of this dance? Yes, yes," Alexis said. "In fact, he was the who started them. He started June dances."

"For what purpose?" Oriella asked. "How are proceeds used?"

Straight to the point, Carella thought, wondered what Art had who'd taken a about the money-changers in the temple --

think of the new parish priest.

"We buy baskets for the poor," Alexis said.

i.

"Baskets?"

lod baskets, yes, Father. To take around on morning." "Oriella nodded in satisfaction to who nodded in return.

"Last year, we made around two thousand "Alexis said.

you say these dances on the first day of June Father Michael

,. "Oh, yes, Father. He started them three years "

:i. "Then I think it would be a fitting memorial to the scheduled. In honor of Father l's devotion to the needy c
You give Kenny his check," Oriella said. "And I will end
myself, and give my blessing to everyone there." "Thank y
she said. "I'll tell Gloria."

She was starting out when Martha Hennessy peared in the
frame
behind her. The tiny fffice was about to get crowded. Hav
too many small crafts during his tour of duty in the Navy
beginning to feel claustrophobic.

"Mrs. Hennessy," he said, "'we'd like to look through the
were hoping you'd show us around."

"I'd be happy to," she said, and then, to Alexis, "Hello,
are you?" "Fine, thanks, Mrs. Hennessy," Alexis said, tta
Father, we'll look for you on Friday night," and stepped
small entry that

Separated the chancellery from the remainder of the recto
and Carella said their Father Oriella, she began chatting
was still talking to her came out a moment later. She tur
giving him the impression that she' waiting for him.

"There's something I want to tell you," "Sure," he said.

"Could we talk privately?"

Something in her dark eyes signaled "

"I'll meet you in the church," he said to and then led AL
to the garden wh priest had been slain. The roses were st
aroma overpowering. Where once the been the chalked outli
priest on the u floor of the garden, there was now only t
weathered stone itself. They walked to the mapl sat on th
bench that circled it. Them moss on the tree behind them.
the walls of the cottage. This could have courtyard in an
village.

"I don't want to get anyone in trouble," said.

He waited.

"But..."

The essential word.

Still, he waited.

"This was Easter Sunday," she said. "I was going crosstown to Gloria outside movie theater on Eleventh and The Stem. That was around two-thirty, a very windy day, I "

skirts flapping about her legs, long blonde hair in the wind. She was supposed to meet Gloria at the theater at three, an Eddie Muller. Gloria and Alexis are both freshmen at a school on Seventeenth. The Graham. One of the few good schools in the precinct. She was half a block away from a public school an assistant principal was stabbed to break up a fistfight. She still has almost an hour before she's supposed to meet her, though, still has plenty of time although she's been to mass early this morning, she is still there again now, coming up the Street side where someone has painted a star on the green gate leading to the rectory and the rectory, please continue north to Stem, where the theater is, but instead of Culver, and impulsively going into the through the big entrance which are closed but unlocked...

"I thought I'd say a few extra prayers, this was, like, yesterday Sunday..."

... coming through the narthex, and walking up the center aisle, nave, the church empty, her heels clicking on the polished floor --

this is Easter Sunday and she is wearing patent leather medium-high heels --

clicking as she approaches the crossing, the transept on her left, the sacristy on her right, the belfry

immediately ahead of her, and behind it the huge cross hanging on it and from a dozen wounds in his side and his hands once there were voices, Michael's voice and someone else's

... coming from the paneled corridor

from the sacristy into the priest's small stone his rectory startling her because first time she has ever heard Father

anger. She stops dead in the center of the cro:

here where the middle of Jesus's chest we were this a tru
than the tradi stone-and-
timber architectural re stands shocked and
silent as the priest's voice

down the corridor as if from the neck of a its open cup,
the church, echoin vaulted ceiling, This is blackmail, he

She does not know quite what do do. She sudden guilt of a
is wearing she is only thirteen eavesdropping on an fearf
discovered in the next instant punished for her transgres
the by the woman he is... "A woman?" Carella said at once
with a woman?"

"Yes."

"And you heard him use the word blackmail?"

..s. And she said, "I'm doing this for your own . ' '

then what?"

lexis stands there at the middle of the e-and-
timber cross that is St.

Catherine's rch, looking up at the huge plaster figure of
genuine oaken cross behind the the priest's voice coming
right, is afraid to turn her head to locate the voice, sh
discover Father Michael lunging at in a rage, shouting at
shouts at the Get out of my sight, how dare you, how dare
woman is suddenly laughing, the iughter echoing, echoing,
the sound of slap, flesh hitting flesh. Alexis turns and
ierrified, they are both shouting behind her now, she us
entrance doors, heels strafing the ooden floor, slipping,
her balance, asping for the back of the nearest bench, ri
running again, running, running, she is not used to heels
the central portal doors and coming face to face with a h
streaming down his... "Nathan Hooper," Carella said.

"I screamed, I shoved myself past him, there were other m
I ran away from there as fast as I could."

She had called them men. And to her terrified eyes those

teenagers indeed must have appeared to be men. But hadn't

"Doesn't that name mean anything to asked. "Nathan Hooper

"Yes, of course, now it does, I saw his

the newspaper, I even saw him in television. But at the t
just this... black man with blood running down his face,
was get out of there. I think mind I made some crazy kind
Father Michael yelling and the woman all the yelling outs
I've never scared in my life. All that blood. All that an
who the woman was?" asked.

"I don't want to get anyone in trouble," said, and looked

He waited.

"But..." she said.

And still he waited.

"If she had anything to do with Father murder, then..."

Her eyes met his.

"Who was she?" he said. "Was she anyone know?" "I only sa
back," Alexis said.

"What'd she look like?"

"She was a tall woman with straight blonde Alexis said. "

And like Kristin Lund's, Carella thought.

what'd you do?" Shad Russell asked. "Rob a "Not quite," M

"Then what? Saturday you're here haggling over price of a
by the way, was a very bargain .-

and Tuesday you're back with, how did
you say?"

"Five hundred thousand."

"You got that much change in your pocketbook "Sure," Mari

I'll bet," Russell said knowingly. "So how'd you into all
"Liquidation," she said.

"Of who? Who'd you dust, honey?"

"I understand that the normal return on a drug investment
one," she said, straight for the jugular. "I need two mil
I'm assuming if I invest half a million..."

"Is that what we're talking here?" Russell said, surprise
told you on the phone I was looking to make an investment

"I thought you meant an investment of time. I thought you
once interested in one of my major situations."

"I am. The Colombian merchant."

"But not in the same way I hoped you'd be interested."

"No, not in that way," Marilyn said, and wondered if she
through go damn ex-

hooker routine yet another time be could settle down
to the business at hand. in a little bar off St. Sebastia
from Russell's hotel. There were enough girls in it, even
hour, to satisfy of every major Colombian merchant in the
either black or Hispanic, and Colombian gentlemen prefer

Smiling like a crocodile, Russell leaned table and said,
could mix pleasure in with the business, what do you

"I think no, and let's cut the crap, please.:i many keys
I get for the hundred?" "That kind of bread, that's peanu
said, immediately getting down to tacks. "There's no char
discount, you'd to pay the going rate, which is very high
of all the pressure. Forty, fifty grand a depending on th
what does that Divide five hundred by fifty, what do you
she said, and wondered where he'd to school.

"Okay, that's if we're paying fifty, we get keys. If we'r
what do we get?"

"Twelve and a half."

"So average it out, let's say you pay

let's say you get eleven keys for the five that'd be doing
days."

how much would those eleven keys be on the street?" , 'Y'ou
high, eight to one, that's high."

"Then what?"

"You step on a kilo even once, you come away with ten thousand
crack. Nowadays, a bag is for twenty-
five bucks. That's a quarter of a
you come away with, for the one key. That you forty-
five for. That's
around five and a half to you'd be getting. So figure you
five into like two million seven, something in Exactly the
need," Russell said, smiled his crocodile smile.

"No, all I need is two." "Plus my commission," he said, s

"That seems very steep."

"Seven hundred thousand is steep?" Russell said, looking off
somebody cheaper?

In fact, you know anybody at all?"

"I can always call Houston again. I'm sure Sam can find m

"Sure, call him. Meanwhile, I got the feeling you were in
hurry." "Even so, that's steep," she said, shaking her head.
hundred thousand? That's very steep."

Bargaining. When her fucking life was at stake.

Settle with the man, she thought.

"So is that it?" Russell said. "Are we finished talking h

"For that kind of I'd money expect you to the entire transaction
said. Still bargaining.

"Meaning what?"

"Setting it up, making the buy, turning "

"I can tell you right now nobody's going eleven keys to s
invisible."

"Oh? Did you suddenly get invisible?"

"I'm talking about they smell I'm making for somebody else
come out. They know who they're doing business with."

"I can't get involved in this," she said.

Not bargaining this time. Merely Willis. Thinking that if
during the transaction, if the police came might hurt Wil
Thinking... "Then don't get involved in moving Russell sa
want to make a deal, I'll the buy for you. You show with
the buy yourself. Then I'll see about around."

"I have to be positive you can turn it "Tell you what. If
it around, you owe me a nickel. Is that fair?"

"Then what do I do with the eleven keys?" "Snort it," Rus
smiled his smile. "When do you need this money?"

"How about tomorrow afternoon?"

"Impossible."

"Then when?"

can't set up the buy before Thursday night, st. Have you
on this money ,?"

"I have a cashier's check."

"Honey, please don't make me laugh. In this iness? A chee

"A cashier's check is as good as cash."

"Then cash it."

"All right."

"You know anything about high-grade coke?"

"A little."

"Enough to know whether they're selling you sugar instead

"No."

I'll teach you. They'll expect you to test the stuff. Even fuckin' ritual with them. You test it, you taste it, you cash, they give you the shit, and you go your separate way from the ritual, they think you're undercover and they blame ain't without its certain risks, this business," he said

"When will you know for sure?"

"Tomorrow." I'll call you," she said.

"No, let me call you."

"No," she said.

"Why not?"

"Just no."

"Okay, you know where to reach me," Russell said, and showed if to say there understanding the ways of beautiful brothers living on their backs. "Give around this time tomorrow. In any way I figure, you better cash that check on and I'll let them they wanna meet "No," she said. "Specify one-on-one. pick the place."

"They may not go for that."

"I'm paying top dollar. If they don't terms, tell them to themselves and we somebody else." "Tough lady," he said, "You that gun I sold you?"

"No."

"You want my advice? Buy another one. me or somebody else matter. A bit this time." "What kind of gun did you have in

"We done this before, you know," Mrs. said. "Father Michael over the top to bottom searching for the dope."

"Yes," Carella said. "His sister told me."

"Nice lady, ain't she? The sister." "Yes," Carella said.

"I thought so first time I met her," Mrs. Hennes said, smiling in memory.

When was't at?" "Shortly before Easter," she said. "Around

Which fell each year on the seventeenth of Which certainly qualified as

before Easter" in that Easter this year had on the fifteenth. Carella wondered if then Father Michael had been involved with a dangerous lady. In which case, why hadn't he mentioned her while she was visiting here?

: "... a search for dope?" Haw, es was saying.

|! "Well, we got a phone call," Mrs. Hennessy said.

|i "What phone call?

lthe "Krissie took a phone call one afternoon, I was in on it..." I When was this.

"Last month someone.

"When last month?"

"About a week after that black boy got beat up," Mrs. Hennessy said. "The call was for Father Michael. He took it, listened for a few minutes, said, 'I don't know what you're talking about,'"

"Who was it?"

"Who was who?"

"On the phone."

"Oh. I don't know. But Father Michael turned to Krissie and

this guy says...' "

"Is he called her?"

that what Hawes "Yes. Or sometimes Krissie." Hawes nodded nothing. But C the look that crossed his face.

"Kris, this guy says there's dope hidden church here and back,' "Mrs. He said, and nodded.

"So it was a man on the phone," Hawes "I guess so." "Did say who it was?" asked.

"No, sir."

"He didn't say it was Nathan Hooper, did "No, sir."

"Did he say it sounded like a black person?"

"No, sir. He didn't say nothin' but what I you he said. 'there's dope the church here and he wants it back.' Is wh said. So we begun looking for it."

"Where'd you look?"

"Everywhere."

"Meaning?"

"Meaning everywhere. Places hadn't cleaned or disturbed s was built, a hundred years thick. Nooks and crannies I kn Secret passageways..."

"Secret passageways?" Hawes said.

"This church used to be part of the under "Mrs. Hennessy escaping the south used to come hide in the church here."

"What goes around comes around," Hawes said, nodded.

Carella, deep in thought, missed Hawes's .,nce to history repetitions. He was :mbering back to when Marilyn Hollis poisoning, and Willis had fallen in love with her. It had even though the ending turned out to be happy one. Carell

favor of happy endings. But judging from the look that had

i-Tawes face when he'd heard that the called --

priest

his secretary either Kris or Krissie rather than Kristin
or Whatever the Hell, Carella "Suspected that his this t
been partner |
similarly stricken, and he hoped with all his might
Krissie Lund turned out to be similarly clean.

Because /
f she was the woman who'd tried to blackmail Father Michael
Easter Sunday... Or, worse, if she was the woman who'd be
involved with the priest...

Or, worse yet, /
f she was both adulteress and blackmailer at one and the
same time..

- "Show us the easy places first," Haes told Mrs. I'Ienne

She always became apprehensive when he started drinking h
dinner. All the other times had happened when he'd come o
the store and started the evening by pouring a stiff drink
a little past six now, he'd already consumed two healthy
himself a third one at the cou near the kitchen sink. Ice
cube tray open
on counter. Tanqueray gin, he drank only the Tanqueray or
Wouldn't allow ache gin in the house. Asked her once if s
was made from juniper berries? And did she that juniper b
poisonous? She known whether he was kidding or not. He sa
to confuse her. He could be cruel way.

She never knew whether one of his spells, she guessed you
them... triggered by something that had happened at store
whether they had something with the calendar, or the phas
or tides like a woman's period. She suspected was somethi
these spells of his, what happened was some kind of subst

that he got off on first getting drunk and then... "You c
right?" he said.

"I'm making a nice dinner for us," she said.

"Which means you disapprove, right?"

Pouring the gin liberally over the ice cubes in short fat
Fingers curled around the Outside, there was thunder in the
days now since they'd had any rain. Rain would be welcome

"I asked you a question, Sally."

She wondered if he was already drunk. Usually it took more
them, however heavily he'd poured them. She didn't want a
start. And yet, whenever he got this way, no matter how close
tiptoed around him, there didn't seem to be anything she could
prevent what came next. It was like a button inside him got
then all the gears started turning and meshing, and there was
you could do to stop the machine.

Except maybe get out of here. Get away from the machine.
it. She thought maybe she should get out of here right then
before the machine started again.

"Sally?" "Yes, Art," she said, and realized this was a moment
moment it left her mouth. His name was Arthur, he liked to hear
his full name. Arthur.

Not Art, not Artie, but Arthur. Said Arthur sounded majestic
King, whereas Art or Artie sounded like garage mechanics.
she said at once.

"You still haven't answered my question," he said.

Good. He was ignoring the fact that she'd called him Art
Arthur. Maybe this wasn't going to be a bad one, after all.
tonight the machine would merely grind to a halt before it

"Did you hear my question, Sally?"

"I'm sorry, Arthur..."

Making certain she called him Arthur this "... what was that

"Do you disapprove of my drinking?"

"Not when you do it in moderation. Because making us a ni
tonight, Arthur..."

"What nice dinner are you making us toni asked mockingly,
short fat his lips, and drained it.

Outside, lightning flashed and thunder "Salmon steak," sh
"With lovely asparagus I got flesh at the Koreans'." "I h
he said.

"I thought you liked asparagus," she thought it was brocco
"I hate asparagus and broccoli," he said, and to the cour
lifted two ice cubes tray and dropped them into the tumbler
would not pour himself another drink.

He poured himself another drink.

"Asparagus and broccoli and cauliflower the other shitty
make that I hate, said. "Brussels sprouts..."

"I thought you liked..."

"... and cabbage and all of them," he said, lifted the gl
lips. "A man gets forty-
nine years old, he's been married to the woman
for twenty-
five years, you think she'd what he likes to eat and what
doesn't like to eat.

But oh no, not Fat Sally..."

The Fat Sally hurt.

He was going to hurt her tonight.

"... Fat Sally goes her merry fat way, cooking whatever t
wishes to cook, with never a thought as to what her husba

"I give a lot of thought to..."

"Shut up!" he said.

I have to get out of here, she thought. The last time I w
I waited until it got out of hand, and then there was no

don't care if the dinner burns to a crisp, she thought, I have to get out of here. No

But she waited.

Giving him the benefit of the doubt.

Because after the last time, when she'd gone to Father Michael and told him what had happened, things seemed to get a little better. What... almost two months ago, the beginning of April, she'd gone to church for Easter, right, after he'd written that terrible letter. She'd decided not to write the letter, she'd told him he'd be making a fool of himself before the entire congregation, but he'd insisted on typing it up in the apartment and then taking it to the bank to Xerox how many copies he'd needed, said he resented the way the priest was turning the church into a financial institution, his words. And, of course, the congregation did think he was a fool for writing that dumb letter. The very next Sunday Father Michael made a sermon about money, mentioning the he'd received, the letter Arthur had sent. This was exactly a week before Easter this was his second sermon. She'd got that night. And the very next day, she'd gone to church with her eyes puffy, her lip split... "The very bad habit you're talking about is interrupting," he said.

"Oh, I know," she said pleasantly, still giving: the benefit of the doubt, still hoping that her "the priest had changed the subject" at that now that Arthur realized someone else what was going on. But the priest was dead.

Someone had killed the priest.

... even when I was a young girl," she said voice trailing off to..."

And fell silent.

Interrupt, she thought.

All the time, she thought.

He was standing at the counter, putting cubes into the glasses. He'd lost count of how drinks he'd had already. Outside, there was a rumble and then thunder, and then the rain down in sheets, driving him to a wirid. She staring at his back. He stood stock still at the

wrapped around the lever that pried the ice-cube tray. Little egg-crate

tray, the lever fastened to them. The tray empty w. The i gone. The rain coming down in sheets outside.

"Miss. Zaftig," he said. "Isn't that what your little Jew call you?"

"Actually, he did refer to me as zafiig, yes," she said, called me Miss. Zaftig as such."

Don't contradict him, she thought. Agree with everything

"Little Miss. Zaftig," he said, "running to the fucking p

"Well, if you hadn't..."

"Washing our dirty laundry in public I"

"There wouldn't have been any dirty..."

"Taking our dirty laundry to church and washing it for th

"Next time, don't..."

His arm came lashing out at her in a backhanded swipe. His still curled around the lever of the egg-crate divider, the metal outlining twelve empty squares now, the metal edges hitting only barely scratching it because this was truly an inefficient, a silly weapon really, this aluminum tray divider dangling from the end of a lever, hardly a weapon at all.

The gin bottle was quite another thing.

The gin bottle was green and stout, and it had a ilittle that identified it as the genuine article, the Tanqueray, stuff. As quickly as he had swung the tray divider, he no clattering to the tiled kitchen floor, and immedi grasped its neck and yanked it off counter, and pulled it back as preparing forehand tennis shot, the bottle coming around racket level with a ball coming in shoulder high, swinging the ball, high was where her head was.

A red circle of blood splashed onto the go alongside the sloshed from the neck of the bottle onto his wrist, onto spurted now from the gash the bottle had alongside her le blood startled him. seemed to realize all at once that he lethal weapon, that this heavy fashioned of thick green g easily her if he were not terribly careful. He said, real blaming her for his own stupidity picking up the bottle, bottle on her, really?" and threw the bottle into the del smashing it, shards of green exploding up onto the air, c against a dazzling backdrop of yellow- white light lightning flashed again beyond the window.

Thunder rolled.

Oddly, he seemed more dangerous now.

Bereft of any weapons but hi, 's ban miscalculating how po clan those hands could be (but she knew), he closed in he stood cowering against the refri door, blood gushing from her head, bloody left hand clenched to her temple, her ri out like a traffic cop's, the fingers widespread, "Don't," said, "please, don't," but he just kept repeating over an quite senselessly now, "Oh, really?" as if he were contra something she had just said, or perhaps asking for further of what she'd said, "Oh, really?" while he slapped her ov methodically, his huge hands punishing her for whatever s drunkenness he imagined she'd committed.

She reached for the knife on the drainboard.

And quite calmly stabbed him.

The Q and A took place in Lieutenant B office at the 87th half an hour Arthur Llewelyn Fames was released from Gene been treated there for a knife in the left shoulder and h immediately with Assault 1st Degree: "With to cause serio injury to another, " such injury to such person or to a t means of a deadly weapon or a clan instrument," a Class- C Felony punishable by minimum of three and a max of fifteen.

To sweeten the pudding, he had also been with Attempted M

Class-

B punishable by a minimum of three and a max twenty-five. His

wife, Sally Louise Fames, had charged with the identical opinion, around the old station house was that she easily kept by pleading self-

defense. gathered detectives and an assistant district named Nellie Brand were here this Wednesday morning at ten so much to make certain their case against Fames would stand. they

knew they had real meat here but to find out what he knew of murder of Father Michael Bimey.

Carella had called Nellie the moment he realized they had a man whose wife had earlier gone to Father Michael to report abuses.

This same man had written the priest a letter that in itself imply a threat, however veiled. And, by his own admission to the church sometime during the afternoon of Easter Sunday at least one witness Nathan Hooper had reported hearing the violent argument with a man.

Nellie was thirty-

two years old, with alert blue eyes and sand-colored hair cut in a flying wedge that seemed appropriate to her. She was wearing this morning a dark blue skirt with a green pink man-tailored shirt with a narrow red-and-blue silk rep tie, and

blue pumps with moderate heels. Carella liked her a lot; he knew somehow of his sister Angela, though she didn't resemble the slightest.

Sitting on the edge of the lieutenant's desk, she once asked Fames of his rights, and then asked him if he was certain he wished an attorney present. Like most amateurs who suddenly find themselves involved with the law, Fames told he didn't need one because he hadn't done anything, it was his wife who'd committed the crime here! Carella was thinking every little cheap thief who asked for attorney the moment he was clapped in cuffs.

Nellie dutifully informed Fames that he nonetheless stopped at any time chose to, or even request a lawyer whenever he wanted one, even though he'd declined one and asked him again if

all this, Fames rather testily said, "Of course I do I lo
idiot? My wife tried to kill me!"

Miranda-

Escobedo safely out of the way, switched on the tape reco
noddod to stenographer who was taking standby notes, said
that this was 10:07 on morning of May 30, identified the
everyone in it, and then began the questioning:

May I have your full name, please?

Arthur Llewellyn Fames.

And your address?

157 Grover Park South.

In what apartment, please?

12C.

Do you live in that apartment, at that addre with your wi
Louise Fames?

I do. Who tried to kill me last night.-

Mr. Farnes, were you treated at last night in the Emergen
General for a knife wound in the left Damn right I was.

And were you held for overnight observation at Greer Gene
was.

... and released at nine-thirty-
two this morning in custody of
Detectives Hawes and Carella... I was.

... who transported you here to the 87th Precinct for que
that correct?

That's correct.

You've been informed, have you not, that you've been char
Degree Assault, a Class-C felony... I have.

And with Attempted Murder as well, which is a Class-B felony.

It was my wife who tried to kill me!

But were you informed of these charges against you?

I was.

And, of course, you were read your rights in accordance with Court decisions in Miranda and Escobedo, and you said you understood those rights, did you not?

You read them to me, and I said I understood them.

And declined your right to an attorney, is that also correct?

Yes.

Very well, Mr. Fames... Leaning in closer to him now, conveying the impression that now that all the bullshit was the way, she was going to take off the gloves.

Q: Can you tell me how you happened to get that knife wound in the back?

A: She went crazy.

Q: Who do you mean, please?

A: Sally.

Q: Your wife, Sally Louise Fames?

A: Yes.

Q: Went crazy, you say?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you tell me what you mean by that?

A: She went crazy, what do you think that means? We were sitting in the kitchen, and all at once she started screaming and shouting.

she picked up the knife and stabbed me. N Totally nuts!

O: Sitting where in the kitchen? At the Doing what?

A: Talking.

Q: About what?

A: I don't remember.

O: Try to remember.

A: How am I supposed to remember what talking about? She goddamn it!

O."

Do you remember telling your wife that s had a bad habit yod while were...?

A: No.

The way you just interrupted me.

I'm sorry if I interrupted you. I thought you were finish you were saying.

No, I wasn't.

Then I'm sorry.

But isn't that what you told your wife? That she had a bad interrupting?

I may have said that, I don't remember. It is a bad habit yourself.

I don't believe I said that.

Well, you seemed to get upset when I interrupted you just

Did you get upset when your wife interrupted you?

People shouldn't interrupt other people.

Does that upset you? When your wife interrupts?

It would upset anyone. Getting interrupted. I suppose you, that she stabbed me, don't you? I mean, I really don't know the point of did she interrupt me, did I interrupt her, it was she who stabbed, there are hospital records to prove I got stabbed. You yourself there's a knife wound in my left shoulder, it didn't happen by magic, my wife stabbed me, goddamn it!

Do you also remember telling your wife...?

Did you hear what I just said?

Yes, Mr. Farnes, I heard you.

I mean, did you hear a word of what I just said?

I heard all of it, yes.

Then do you understand that my wife stabbed me?

Yes, sir, I understand that. She has, in fact admitted stabbing me.

Well, good, at least she had the decency that!

Do you remember telling her that she also had a bad habit of taking her dirty linen public?

No, I don't remember that.

Of taking your dirty linen to the church washing it for the vicar?

No, why would I say anything like that?

Washing it for Father Michael Birney.

No. No.

Telling him about certain personal life you were having.

We weren't having any personal problems.

Mr. Farnes, did you strike your wife with a divider from an

cube tray?

No.

Mr. Fames, I show you this tray-divider was recovered from apartment 12C at 1 Grover Park South and tagged as evidence Detectives Hawes of the Precinct. Do you recognize it? .

I do not.

Mr. Fames, you are aware, are you not, your fingerprints you arrived here at the station house?

I am.

And you are aware, of course, that the Police Department Section can recover latent prints from inanimate objects those prints with, for example, your fingerprints taken at station house?

I am aware of that.

Do you still say you do not recognize this tray-divider?

I never saw it in my life.

Mr. Fames, I show you the broken neck of a bottle recovered from a sink in apartment 12C at 157 Grover Park South and tagged as evidence Detectives Carella and Hawes of the 87th Precinct. Keeping in mind I just told you about fingerprints, I ask you now did you or your wife with the bottle this neck was once a part of?.

I did not.

That is to say, a bottle containing what remained of a bottle of Tanqueray gin?

I did not.

Mr. Fames, where were you on Easter Sunday?

What?

I asked you where you were on Easter Sunday.

Home, where do you think I was? Easter? Of course I was h

All day?

All day.

Didn't you tell Detectives Hawes and C that you went to S
sometime that afternoon?

Oh. Yes. I'd forgotten that.

Did you go to the church that afternoon?

Yes.

Why?

To talk to Father Michael.

What about?

A letter I'd written to him. We'd ha, misunderstanding ab
I w clear it up with him.

What time did you get to the church?

I don't remember.

Would it have been between two-thirty three?

I really don't know. There was a police outside.

Oh, Jesus, Carella thought, there it goes, up the chimney
Hooper and O'Donnell claimed to have heard the priest m w
man or a woman, depending whose story you believed'm some
thirty
and three. But if Edward's car was there when Fames came
th had to sometime after the argument had taken place. un
lying... Can you describe that car for me?

Tryingto make certain the car had actually been there wh

She'd been briefed before the questioning began, she knew
hour between two-
thirty and three was critical. If Farnes had come to
the church after that time, then he could not have been t
arguing with Father Michael.

It was a police car. What's there to describe about a pol

Do you remember the markings on it?

No. A blue-and-
white car, like any other police car in this city.

Mr. Farnes, where were you between seven and seven-
thirty on the night of
May twenty-fourth?

The night of the murder. She was going for the gold. Never
around the bush. Farnes could either account for his time
priest was being murdered -- or he could not.

When was that? May twenty-fourth?

Last Thursday. Do you remember where you were?

Last Thursday.

Yes.

I'm trying to remember. I think I worked late last Thursd
was at the store inventory.

What do you mean by the store?

My store. I sell men's clothing.

Where is this store, Mr. Farnes?

On The Stem. Between Carson and Coles. called C&C Men's B
Because of cross streets. Carson and Coles. Up p Twentieth
street from the Mcdonald' s.

And you say you were there taking "

on the night of May twenty-fourth.

Yes. I'm pretty certain that's where I was.

Were you there at seven P.M.?

If I was there, then yes, I was there at P.M.

And if you were there, were you also seven-thirty P.M.?

Yes, if I was there, I would have been that time, too.

And at eight P.M.?

Yes.

And at nine?

Yes. All night.

If you were there.

Yes. But I'm fairly certain I was there.

But you're not positive.

No, I'm not positive.

Was anyone with you?

No.

You were alone.

Yes.

Do you normally take inventory alone?

Yes.

So if you were at the store that night, you were there all

Yes.

Which means we have only your word for your whereabouts on May twenty-fourth.

Well, if I was there, there'd be a record.

Oh? What kind of record, Mr. Fames?

My inventory sheets would have a date on them. An inventory without a date is worthless, you see, unless it's dated. The whole purpose of an inventory is to keep you up to date on what you have in stock. That's the purpose.

Yes. And where would you have indicated this date?

In the inventory log. The date, and the quantity and size of any particular item. So I'll know when to reorder. That's the purpose of an inventory.

Yes. Do you still have this inventory log?

I'm sure I do.

Where is it?

At the store, most likely. I usually keep it at the store.

And can you lay your hands on it at any time?

To check the date? So that you can positively say you weren't taking "

night long on May twenty-fourth?

Unless it's missing for one reason or Missing? Why would it be missing?

Well, you know this city. Things get stolen the time.

Are you saying that someone may have your inventory log?

It's possible.

Why would anyone want to steal an log?

This city, who knows?

So what you're saying, actually, Mr. F that if the inventory been stolen, have no way of verifying when inventory-taking happened.

Or lost. The inventory log.

Stolen or lost or misplaced, you would way of verifying w on the of May twenty-fourth.

What has this got to do with my wife me?

It has to do with someone stabbing a priest, Fames.

Is that supposed to be a surprise?

I beg your pardon?

I mean, you're oh-so-very smart here, you, with your trick questions and your all around the mulberry bush,, do you you're dealing here? I have a successful business, I've been at the same fifteen years, I'm not a fool.

No one said you were, Mr. Fames.

Oh, no, you didn't come right out and say it, of course not. Tape going? And this man taking notes? Of course not. But I think I realize what you're trying to do here?

You're trying to make a mountain out of a molehill. You're making that because I had an argument with Father Michael, that you have an argument with him?

I told you we had a misunderstanding.

Yes, but you didn't say you'd had an argument.

A misunderstanding, I said, a misunderstanding. Over a long time the entire... Yes, but just now you said you'd had an argument. You have this argument, Mr. Farnes?

A misunderstanding. Listen, I want to make this clear...

still going? I want it made perfectly clear on the tape that I say misunderstanding, not argument.

Misunderstanding. Your detectives came to see me about that. I told them the misunderstanding had been cleared up, Father. I settled the whole thing on Easter Sunday. There was no more. Is that clear?

Q: On Easter Sunday, do you mean?

/

k: On Easter Sunday or any other time. not argue. Period.

Q: Ever?

/,: Never.

O: Mr. Fames, I can ask for a search locate the inventory mentioned, feel certain you would want to help us find wonder accompany "

t/

detectives to your store... /: No. I want a lawyer.

Nellie looked at Carella. Carella looked

The stenographer looked up from his pad.

Byrnes shrugged. The only sound in the the whirring of the recorder. "Mr.

Nellie said at last, "am I to understand...?"

"You've got it, sister."

"Am I to understand that you will not locate that log?"

"Not unless a lawyer tells me you can do "What is it you are doing?"

"Taking me to the store against my will."

"Very well, Mr. Fames, we'll request a warrant. Am I to understand

further that you wish questioning to stop at this time?" sister," Farnes said again.

Nellie snapped off the tape recorder.

"We're off the air," she said. "You ever call sister again you in the balls, got it?" I'll mention that to my attorney said.

"Please do," Nellie said, and walked out of the It was no o'clock that afternoon that ;lla and Hawes obtained both warrant a Superior Court judge and a key to C&C 's Furnis Sally Farnes. Sally said she led it turned out that her husband, ;d Father Michael, and she hoped further that he be for the rest of his natural life. "he also mentioned that kept his inventory log in the lower right-hand drawer of the desk in his office at the back of the store.

They found the office, they found the desk, and they found the lower right-hand drawer.

The log indicated that Farnes had indeed taken inventory the twenty-fourth of May.

"Nellie'll be disappointed," Carella said. "She was hoping him in a lie."

"This could still be a lie," Hawes said. "Just 'cause he twenty-fourth doesn't mean he actually did it on that date. He could have done it a Week earlier, three days earlier, whenever

"Say he killed the priest," Carella said. "What do you see motive?" "He's a nutcase," Hawes said. "He doesn't need a

"Even a nutcase has what he thinks is a motive "Okay, he was his wife ratt "Then why not kill her? Why the priest." 9" had a further grievance with priest."

"The whole business with the letter, huh?"

"Yeah, and being made to look foolish in of the congregation take them seriously, Steve." "Yeah," Carella said.

.Both men were silent for several moments.

Then Carella said, Do you think he did it.

"No," Hawes said.

"Neither do I," Carella said.

The way Martha Hennessy later described it was just another pack. You read them all the time now, these gangs going to

crazy and doing unspeakable things. This was in a dozen streets, all of them will Mrs. Hennessy could have understood. It could have been black or Hispanic, but white? Came straight into the church at six o'clock it must've she was in the rectory, heard a lot of noise from the church itself, ran through the paneled corridor leading to the back where three of them already there, knocking over things, pictures, art. Inside the church itself, Father Oriella was in English, an Italian, and his secretary, an old Italian woman whose English was atrocious, it was screaming for them to stop. Mrs. Hennessy ran out of the rectory and dialed 911 from the office telephone. A police car arrived in about three minutes flat.

The responding car was Edward's car, because the church was in the precinct's Edward Sector, and the two officers driving there were the same man and woman who'd responded to the fracas here on Easter Sunday. The difference this afternoon, and the reason their response time was so

rapid, was that after the priest's murder, they'd been called to Headquarters and asked a lot of questions about their activities on Easter Sunday, which Inspector Brian McIntyre from Internal Affairs found somewhat less than exemplary in a community rife with tensions. Mindful of the inspector's diatribe and reprimand, Officers Joseph Esposito and Anna Maria Lopez caught the

a
Crime In Progress, specified by the dispatcher as a "rampage at Catherine's Church" --

they hit the hammer and screeched over to the church, where if this wasn't a rampage it sure as hell looked like it. Officer Lopez got on her walkie-talkie and called in an Assist Police Officer, and within another three minutes, cars from the

and Frank sectors, and half a dozen foot-patrol officers assigned to CPEP were responding to the lo swarming all over the church and the rectory, rounding up what eventually out to be teenagers, all of them white, all with Italian names, lead by Robert Corrente. ::

Bobby and his pals all seemed to be rather an unidentifiable bunch, but a controlled seemed not to care that he was now in

a police squadroom, being charged with an assortment of crimes. Bobby was an upon Father Frank Oriella with a brass

Bobby had seized from the main altar friends were knocking over the altar, and altar cloths from it, and otherwise ransacking the church. Bobby was screaming that he was a lawyer. His assorted friends, some of whom were in various parts of the squadroom, I! already in the detention room, parroted every word he said. Bobby lawyer. Bobby a lawyer. He yelled father, they yelled for their fathers here in the squadroom, with everyone in fine Carella wish Bobby had plugs.

When Vincent Corrente arrived at the sq at four P.M. that night, it looked much as he the day Carella talked to him, except that he was wearing a tank top undershirt. Or, if he was, it not visible. He was wearing a Hawaiian print, sports shirt he wore hanging outside his pants. Bobby was still jowly and paunchy and and he was still smoking cigars. The cigar lent a distinctive olfactory dimension to the squadroom, with yelling teenagers, typewriters, ringing telephones, and Bobby shouting shut the fuck up. Corrente was It was difficult to tell, whether he was angrier with his son or with the people who'd

"You dumb bastard," he told Bobby, "what'd you do to the church?" Bobby belted him upside the head. To Carella, he shouted, "You want my cuffs offa my son or you're in deep shit!"

Carella looked at him calmly.

"You hear me? I know people!" Corrente shouted.

"Mr. Corrente," Carella said, "your son has been charged

"I don't care what he's been charged with, he's a juvenile

"He's been charged as an adult."

"He's only seventeen!"

"That's an adult, Mr. Corrente. And he's been charged with

"I want a lawyer!" Bobby shouted.

"Shut up, you dumb bastard!" Corrente said. To Carella, he
don't say anything till my lawyer gets here."

"Fine," Carella said calmly.

He was wondering when Bobby came down off his high.

The lawyer Corrente called was a man I'll call Dominick Abruzzi.

This was getting to be a regular reunion WOPS, the World Organization
Prew Subterfuge, a watchdog society dedicated proposition
American born with an name must keep that name forever, not
completely, nor even Anglicizing it, lest mercilessly and
hounded to his grave reminders that he is merely an ignorant
toity
pretensions. Abruzzi looked as Richard Nixon. Carella guessed
capped.

Thirty-five, thirty-
six years old, tailored suit, a button-down shirt,
and a somber he breezed into the squadroom as if he'd been
similar to it) a thousand times before. Hello to Corrente
Bobby who seemed sinking lower and lower into a depressive
asked, pleasantly enough, "What seems to be the trouble here?"
him what the trouble seemed to be. The trouble seemed to be
Degree
Second-Degree Burglary, First-
Degree Mischief, and Reckless Endangerment
of, Property "That's what the trouble seems to be, he said.
that's, your contention, Detective," Abruzzi said.

Carella was aware of the sense in which Abruzzi used the
"Detective." His intonation

it sound like "Pig."

"No, that's not my contention, Counselor," he "that's what Corrente's been charged "

He did not like attorneys who defended criminals. especially like Italianamericanys who defended criminals, especially like Richard Nixon and smelled of snake and especially who was himself an Italianamerican.

Abruzzi was aware of the sense in which Carella was using "Counselor." His intonation it sound like "Shyster." Abruzzi, a mighty Italian-

American Law Enforcement Officers who thought their calling was as pure and exalted as a priest's. In a democracy was entitled to counsel and everyone was innocent until proven guilty, and Abruzzi was here to make certain that no American would ever be deprived of his fights, God bless America.

"If you don't mind, Detective," he said, "I'd like to talk to you and his father privately." "Sure," Carella said. "Go right ahead."

Counselor."

A uniformed cop escorted Abruzzi and the Correntes down to the Interrogation Room.

Carella went to the cage, threw back the opened the door, and at a time, son. Want to step outside, please?" The eighteen-year-old, fifteen. Dark hair, wide eyes, a pretty mouth. Like Bobby from the high induced by whatever the hell ingested and now he'd been run a railroad locomotive. Carella took him over. He was coming from the Clerical with a cup of tea; he liked tea.

"What's your name, son?" Carella asked "Rudy Perucci," the

"Rudy, you're in trouble," Carella said, him his rights. Carella said gravely. Carell him if he'd understood everything he'd said. Carella asked him if he wanted an attorney.

"Do I need one?" Rudy asked.

"I'm not permitted to advise you on that," said. "You cannot, it's entirely you. Either way, it won't reflect upon your innocence." "It wasn't me who hit the priest," Rudy said.

"Rudy, before you say anything else, I know whether you want an attorney. If you want you can have one. Either your own, or I can get one for you if you don't have one. please tell me if you want an attorney."

"What else do they say I done?" Rudy Carella read off the charges.

"That's serious, huh?" Rudy said.

Carella started to tell him exactly how serious it was. The assault was punishable by a max of The burglary charge... "We didn't do anything," Rudy said.

"Rudy, please don't say anything else, okay?" Carella said. "I'll tell you what these charges are and then you can decide about a plea. You get to fifteen for the assault, fifteen for up to ten years burglary, twenty-five for the reckless endangerment, and seven for the criminal mischief."

"I only, went along," Rudy said. "I didn't do anything."

"Do you want a lawyer, Rudy?"

"If I didn't do anything, why do I need a lawyer?"

"Yes or no, Rudy?"

"No, I don't need a lawyer."

"Are you willing to answer questions without a lawyer present?"

"Yes. I don't need a lawyer, I didn't do anything."

"Can you tell me what happened?" "I only went along," Rudy said.

"How did it start?"

"We were trying some stuff Bobby got hold of."

"What stuff?. What'd you take, Rudy?"

"I don't even know the name of it. We just said yes."

He grinned. He had just made a joke about Nancy Reagan's foolish slogan. Anybody who'd ever smoked only so much as exactly how stupid the Just Say No campal been. Rudy was now. To knew how dumb it had been. Carella smiled Two old familiar with the ways abuse. But only one of them had go church.

"It was real good, man," Rudy said, still Carella was wild had been real "So what happened?" he asked pleasantly.

"Bobby wanted to go get his stuff back."

"What stuff?."

"The stuff the nigger ripped off."

"Ripped off?."

"Yeah, you know."

"No, I don't know. Tell me."

This is the fifth episode of Rashomon.

there will be no more installments. This is the chapter. Carella hopes it is the final They are back to Easter Sunday, windy, shitty day, everyone seems to agree weather. And it's two-

thirty, three o'clock afternoon, everyone agrees on the time well. the star player, or at least one of the star this time interminable little me once again coming up Eleventh Street calls his Nigger Shuffle, and grinning into wind like he Alexis has not anything about this part of the saga because witness to it, but so far Hooper's, Bobby's, Seronia's were in agreement. But they to the dope part again, which dope there to sell, and next there to buy, and next off with a accused him of using funny the last time they traded. And are going into the hallway again, and another dope transaction to go down, these two Bobby and Hooper-

- are in the habit of exchanging money for dope, you see, and vice versa, Mrs. Reagan, which little girls in red hoods should not go wandering off into where evil and corruption lurk, hmmm?

So there in the hallway, out comes the crack. A hundred vials to the tiny glass tubes perfume samples come in, except they don't contain Eau du Printemps. These vials contain little look like exaggerated grains of salt but which are actual base, which is made by heating a mixture of baking soda, hydrochloride and water, and then letting it cool.

These little vials are deadly.

Out comes the crack... "And out comes the piece," Rudy sa

"The piece."

"A gun?"

"A gun."

"Bobby pulled a gun?"

"No, no. The nigger pulled the gun.

... because what he has in mind, you see, is taking these worth four hundred bucks and not giving Bobby a red cent the piece is for. Which upon closer looks like a .38 cali Wesson Re Police Model 33, capable of putting very lar in who is stupid enough grabbing that plastic bag of crack a Unless the someone is standing a little side of and slight nigger, and there's a baseball bat (and also a softball a only the bat that is of importance) corner of the hallway the kids when his mother called him upstairs to The bat i against the wall, and the the softball are on the floor, the mitt (although this is an insignificant detail)!: the slightly behind and to the le Hooper is not Bobby Corrent bro Frankie Corrente, who is rapidly learning the of the especially how to seize opportunity.

Not to mention the handle of a ball bat.

Which he does, in fact, seize.

And swings the bat with practiced ease target that is Nat head. From the of his eye, Hooper sees the bat coming, an his left shoulder, sort of hunkering into it, turning at trying to deflect blow, which he partially succeeds in do hits his shoulder first and only then bounces to graze hi not enough to .,rious wound, but it is enough to prevent possible coma. It is also enough to his grip on the gun t he can fire shot. And as the gun clatters to the floor an back the bat for yet another swing at fences, Hooper reco time to get the out of here, but not without the dope for

now paid with a broken head. So off he goes with the bag in his left hand and the pack in full cry behind him, and the re ends in church not once, but twice.

"The second time is today," Rudy said. "When we went back for the stuff."

Because, yes, Virginia, it is true that Hooper stashed the stuff someplace inside the church.

Bobby and his pals know this is so. Not because when he called the priest on the way to the hospital, they couldn't see the crack nowhere in sight; he could've had it in his pocket, because pretty soon after the incident on Easter, Hooper was around Fifth Street that as soon as it was safe to go back, he was gonna be one rich nigger. And also, this must've been a few days before the priest got killed, they were fooling around with a kid named Fat Harold, kidding around with him, you know, with the knucks and the burn, this was near the school, and he told Bobby with Hooper when he called the church and warned the priest to get his dope back.

So the dope is there inside the church, right? Someplace inside.

Four hundred dollars worth of crack.

And there hasn't been a single nigger snoopin' around looking for it, there aren't any blacks go to St. Catherine's second of all, and what happened to on Easter, and they don't want a taste of it.

This doesn't mean Bobby and the guys been in there tiptoeing around a dozen looking for it, but they can't find the fucking thing, it's too good. So it's beginning to like four hundred bucks for a straight dow toilet.

Until today.

Today, Bobby gets sore.

And he tells them they're going to that church they're going upside down till they findi fuckin' dope.

Which is what they done.

"But not me," Rudy said. "I just went along. I didn't hit the candlesticks, the altar, the incense, I didn't do any of those things. And, a how if nobody stole nothing?" Carella explained that it was knowingly entered or remained unlawfully building with in a crime.

"But we didn't go there to commit a crime," Rudy said. "We went there for dope rightfully

to Bobby." Carella explained that criminal mischief was a

And so was assault. And so was reckless "rment.

Rudy shook his head over the inequity of the law.

"Good thing I didn't do none of those things," he said. "Who did?" Rudy asked.

The entire reason for this little exercise. Get one of them to nail one of the others.

get another one talking to save his own skin, have him nail one. The Domino

ry of law enforcement and criminal investigation.

"I just went along," Rudy said.

"Too bad you've been charged," Carella said sympathetically. "You get a thing like this, a bunch of guys acting in concert. You put your head over the inequity of the law.

"I don't see why I should take the rap for something I didn't do," Rudy said, beginning to sound a bit indignant.

"Yeah, it's too bad," Carella said. "But if you didn't see the priest over the altar, for example, or who hit the priest..."

"Bobby hit the priest."

"Bobby Corrente?"

"Yeah. I saw him grab the candlestick and hit him with it."

Fava knocked over the big one. And..."

And that was the beginning.

When Dominick Abruzzi came back squadroom after having talked to his client, he "May I have a word with you, Detective No more the word "Detective." "Sure," Carella said•

"My client went into the church because having an allergy," Abruzzi said• Carella looked at him.

"Lots of pollen in the air this time of church is relatively free. It was a him." "I'm sure," Carella said. "Dust free"

Abruzzi looked at him.

"The wagon gets here at six," Carella said. that, you can see the client downtown. night, Mr. Abruzzi," he said, and went to the door and knocked on it.

"Come!" Byrnes shouted•

in this church, here in this hallowed place, Our ther who were hallowed be Thy name, searching now behind a life-sized plaster statue of the Virgin Mary holding the crucified Christ in her arms. At this place, on his hands and knees but not praying, lifting his head instead and looking under them, groping along stone walls, inspecting niches in which there were statues of saints he could not recognize or could not remember, Carella was transported when a young boy who looked somewhat like the man he'd grown up in a church not too far away from this one . the family had moved uptown to Riverhead ---

He sat Sunday after Sunday listening to the drone of ritual, barely able to keep his eyes open.

Sunday after Sunday.

He was inside a church again today, seeking not salvation. Because Lieutenant Byrnes had told him to find that dope. If there was dope inside the church, then the black girl was the one her brother stashing it there and Hennessy was telling them to call so calling up and wanting it back, and the existed that O somebody else had back for it sometime before this afternoon.

the case, then maybe the some1 who'd come looking for it the instead., And such a chance encounter called i great possibilities, least of which violence. Where there was a murder always existed. So find the goddamn and at least m your goddamn Sunday after Sunday.

Sundays with sunshine blazing through the high windows on the illuminating stained glass that had been a local artist this Italian section of the (which was no Firenze, that was dust climbing to the ceiling while from the organ loft floated out onto the scintillated air, boy with slanting eyes and listened to priest and wondered what it was all about.

On the day of his first holy communion was ten or eleven, there a life was so alien to him now that he could no remember dates of the most events in a young Catholic's life his cowlick at the back of his head, walked to the church with father and Uncle Lou, all so long ago.

Carella he was called Stevie back then, a name : 'd always until a girl a few years later lbbbed him Stevie-Weevie in an attempt to make feel childish; he was twelve and she was a vast difference in age, he'd gone in tears. But on the day of his first holy accepted the wafer on his allowed it to melt there, careful it ..cause this was the flesh and the blood of Jesus and bleed in his mouth, blood would flow in his mouth, or so understand by one of the nuns who'd taught him his catech Monday and ay afternoons after school.

He'd felt a deep and reverent attachment to God that day. know exactly what it was he believed, it was all mumbo-jumbo of a sort to him, but he knew that he felt an inner glow when that in his mouth, and he knelt there at the altar railing with and his cowlick plastered down, and he felt somehow enriched happened this day, so very long ago.

Enriched. And somehow joyous. He'd gone to his first confession before, nothing to confess at that age, he truly was with innocent... Well... I lied, Father, and I ate meat on Friday talked back to my mother. Sins. A boy's sins. forgiven, a handful of Hail Marys, a couple of Our Fathers, and an Ag lamb again, joyous in the presence, on the following day,

his communion. '

A year or so later, two years, so remember now, he was co church, wearing the same blue suit, which beginning to ou ribbon on his his Uncle Lou looking tall and handsome in matched his own, neatly mustache, his father gave him a g his new initial on it, L for Louis, in honor godfather, S Louis Carella, am a man. Sunday after Sunday in that then church in Riverhead, three from the house his parents wer own bedroom, he was a man now, he no shared bedroom with

Angela.

called him Stevie anymore. He was Steve Sunday after Sund

Rainy Sundays in the new church, slithering down the wind glass Riverhead, he missed the stained glass they'd Isola sonorous voice floating out the heads of the worshippers, wafting from thuribles, a lightning flash, the thunder, t something else now, or real, the perfume of young girls, headier than the incense, he was beginning to mind wander of panties when he ,uld have been thinking of God.

Years later, on the Saturday before Easter he st have bee sixteen, he could hardly tuber anymore he was infused with

spiritual fervor he'd felt on that day of his first , and his bicycle, a black and ite Schwinn with a battery-powered horn, and pedaled over to the church, and locked the bike the wroug iron fence outside... His father used to tell stories about the days even have to lock your front door, but that when there we the streets...

i ... and he took off his hat... He used to wear this sha baseball cap that seen better days, but it was the good l when he pitched a no-hitter... and he went into the church and dipped his into the font of holy water and made the sign of cros down and waited his turn to enter the confession box. And the padded kneeling bar, and the little door slid open ar vaguely see the priest's face behind the screen partition crossed himself and said, "Bless me, Father, for I have s

six months since rny last confession."

There was a silence behind the screen.

Carella waited.

And then the priest said, "And you pick the busiest time come?"

Carella confessed his sins. He had done bad things that h away from the for six months because he'd been afraid of a priest, evil things like Irish girl named Marge Gannon, little.., well, a lot.., and saying Fuck you, dirty basta told him what he had as penance, and Carella said, "Thank the confession box, and was starting the center aisle to fully say the penance so that tomorrow he could communion same glow he'd first time, when all at once he stopped de the aisle, and he thought What mean, the busiest time of busiest times of the year? I was feeling good came in her be near God! So hell do you mean he actually thought thos hell, here in the church, standing middle of the aisle ha altar hell do you mean, the busiest time of the year?

And he turned his back to the altar, and the aisle, and church, and he lucky baseball cap down on his head, uncha and rode away from the without looking back at it. He had church again until his sister's wedding eleven ago.

He was in one today.

Looking for dope.

Father Michael had searched the church and undoubtedly he nooks crannies more completely than any outsider ld have. had searched it again with and Bobby Corrente and his fri ther more reckless search,, and no one had come with the of crack. So maybe the wasn't here, after all, maybe all Rashomon were false. And even if the crack was here, what talking about? Five hundred .liars? That was the street v crack Nathan Hooper allegedly had stashed inside St.

Catherine's. A lousy five hundred dollars. Was that enough someone for? In this city, yes. In this city five hundred was enough to kill someone for. And if someone had come t

to retrieve that dope... And had been intercepted by Father
Perhaps challenged by him...

Yes, it was possible. The lieutenant was right.

Where there was dope, there was often murder.

Sighing heavily, he started the search one more time.

From the top.

Playing his own Rashomon tune.

Imagining himself as Nathan Hooper entering this church
with the pack in full cry behind him.

Through the massive center doors. Urn of holy Water on the
Stainless steel, sitting on a black wrought-
iron stand. Little upright
brass fastened to the top of its lid. Little brass spigot
below. He pressed the button on the A drop of water fell
fingers of his hand. He could remember back to a time when
water in a church were filled to every day of the week. Not
empty on Sundays. The urn was simpler. It held... three quarts
water? You didn't have to go around the church filling all the
basins time.

To the right of the entrance doors was containing religious
matter. New: rifled National Catholic Register and Our Visitor
Catholic Twin Circles. Pamphlets titles like Serving God's
Be, Your Will and Students Pursue the Infinite Will of God
Proclamation: Aids for Lessons of the Church Year, this pamphlet
subtitled Lent. The rack was fashioned of wood troughlike
holding the printed had felt inside those troughs, searching
when he'd gone through the with Hawes. He did it again now.

The offerings box stood alongside the rack; one was expected
donations reading material. There were twenty-
two of boxes scattered
throughout the church; he counted them on his earlier search.
resembled nothing so much as a black iron safe a black iron top
of it. The box was a foot square, with a heavy padlock fastened
front, where the box opened. The tower sprang the center
rising to about Carella's buckle. It was a three-

inch-square chute with
a in the top of it. The slit was perhaps three inches and
wide. Big enough to accept a wadded bill.

Or a vial of crack.

But wouldn't Father Michael have emptied all the boxes in
since Easter Sunday? And even if Hooper had dropped a doz
and there in offerings boxes around the church...

But this would have taken time.

He was being chased by an angry mob.

But, hold it. Rashomon, okay?

He comes running into the church, carrying his plastic ba
precious hundred vials in it. The vials are identical to
perfume samples come in. In fact, most crack dealers get
from wholesale specialty houses. The sale of these tiny c
skyrocketed since crack came into vogue. If you checked t
these houses, you'd think half the population of this cit
gone into the perfume business. Little perfume tubes cont
crack crystals, most of them white, some of them with a y
little clear crystals looking as if they've been chipped
rock, it is sometimes called rock because of its appearan
yellow, when

you smoke the shit, when you melt it and vapors, it produ
immediate high that the top of your head off. So he's car
of crack in a small plastic bag... They'd have fit in a s

They're what, those vials? An inch long? of an inch in di
plastic cap top of the vial, well, just like the perfume
are what these deadly little con are. So yes, they were s
fit insi smallest of the commercial plastic bags, one of
sized

things and yes, practically the thing he'd have seen when
running church would have been the offerings box black co
wouldn't have taken; more than a few minutes to dump thos
top of the tower, turn over the bag of funnel them in, us
his free a shovel, it was possible. Two, three minutes at
three minutes. With all of roaring up behind him?

But suppose he'd been too frightened to there in the entrance... suppose he'd run the church instead... Carella stepped through into the ... and was suddenly confronted with a feast of boxes. There were shrines right and to his left... Dedicated to the Reverend... there were more statues of saints, were marble and goldleaf screens above were standing racks holding votive candles... were racks fastened to the wall and holding yet votive candles... everywhere the candles there was an offerings box. Nathan had seen what Carella was seeing now.

everywhere. Candles and flowers. The ends of the cross stained glass on the north wall of the to the right of the altar... Jesus is crucified... death... Jesus is made to bear His cross... Jesus is to triumph.

Carella walking up the side aisle now... ... a stained glass window... an air-conditioner it.

He passed his fingers over the evaporating fins.

but an inch of space between each fin. Had opened dropped his head... one of the conditions set under windows everywhere the church was being chased! He had time to look, to find, to... More candles on the wall.

And another offerings box.

Maybe Fames had been right about the good priest's obsessive devotion to the tithe.

Jesus falls the First time under His cross... And more candles.

And an offerings box.

And a shrine with a statue of Jesus with his open robe revealing a radiating gold-leaf rays, fresh flowers under the statue. And votive candles.

an offerings box.

Jesus meets His afflicted Mother... A candle rack fastened to the wall metal lip at its topmost edge, forming an angle with the wall felt behind the lip.

Double rows of candles flickering.

Where? he thought.

There were niches all over the church, little insets in the wall, some of them statues.

He felt behind each statue for the third fingers widespread. Nothing.

Niches everywhere.

He passed a font designed for bearing holy little steel balls in a stone cavity. He empty basin. It fit the cavity exactly, a millimeter of an inch to spare. No place to hide here, and he would have contained Easter Sunday, Hooper was being would have time to... Hey.

Hey, wait a minute.

Wait a holy goddamn minute!

He came running up the righthand side church, passing the altar, the cross in order... Jesus is placed in the sepulchre... past the arched doorway that led sacristy and the rectory. Jesus is taken down from the cross... ... passed another altar with a statue of yet ther saint, flowers at his feet... Jesus at the cross... ... opened the center inner doors, and stepped into the entrance lobby, and turned instantly to his right.

Because if the offerings box with its black tower one of the things Hooper had seen ;diately upon entering the church, he'd have seen, had to have seen, was the urn of holy water.

Stainless steel, sitting on a black wrought-iron stand. Little upright brass cross fastened to the top of its lid. Little brass container below. He did not know how often this urn was refilled. It looked too heavy to be carded to a water tap, and he was sure it was regularly filled right here on the spot. Which, if that someone would simply lift the lid and pour water into it, he took off his jacket, unbuttoned the right-hand sleeve of his shirt, shoved the sleeve up to his elbow, and with his left hand

for the brass cross fastened to the urn's lid. Virtually without
breath, he lifted the lid and reached into the water with his hand
Felt around. And... There.

He lifted the plastic bag dripping out of the water.

It was sealed with one of those little yellow plastic ties.

He loosened it.

Kneeling, he shook the contents of the bag onto the stone. It
wasn't waterproof, the first thing that spilled out onto the ground was a
small amount of water. The vials came next. He could tell the
water had some of them as well, partially dissolving the others.
The melting others entirely. But, the crack remained looked a hell of a
crack.

It occurred to him that if the urn had been here since Easter
if Father Michael had blessed the ground between then and the time of
death... Then the crack was holy, too.

Which, in a way, in America today, it was.

It began raining again later that evening, Willis was heading
to a shop Castillo de Palacios. He was going there nobody in
Hillsdale knew anyone Carlos Ortega. This was the address he gave the
Parole Board when he was released from prison in October of last year.
There was no address, the Department of Corrections was of no use.
To find a Carlos Ortega in a city locked up eighty-three of them in the
last little was akin to finding a pork roast in the state capital.
Castillo de Palacios would have been ungrammatical in Spanish if the person's
name, which in this case it

was. Palacio meant "palace" in Spanish, and Palacios meant "palaces".
When you had a plural noun, the article and noun were supposed to agree.
In English where everything was so put together. El Castillo de
Palacios had been the proper Spanish for "The Castle" since Francisco
Palacios was a man. El Castillo de Palacios was correct though it translated as
"Palacios's Castle," a name you sliced it, English or Spanish.

Francisco Palacios was a good-looking man with a few, an-
living habits (now

that he'd served three Istate on a burglary rap) who owned a pleasant little store that sold medicinal herbs, books, and statues, numbers books, tarot cards, and the like. His signs were named Gaucho Palacios and Cowboy Palacios, and they stood behind the other store, and this one offered for such medicinal "marital aids" as dildos, French ticklers, open crotch pants (sin entrepierna), plastic vibrators (eight-inch and ten-inch in the white, twelve-inch in the black) leather executioner's masks, chastity belts, whips With leather thongs, leather anklets studded with penis extenders, aphrodisiacs, inflatable life-sized female dolls, condoms in every color of the rainbow including puce, books to hypnotize and otherwise overcome reluctant women, ben-wa balls in both plastic and gold plate, and a highly popular mechanical clock guaranteed to satisfaction and imaginatively called Suc-u-i Selling these things in this city was not ille Gaucho and the Cowboy breaking This was not why they ran their store store owned by Francisco. did so out of a sense of responsibility to the community of which they were a did not, for example, want a lady in shawl to wander into their backstore shop dead away from playing cards men, women, police dogs and midgets in many aid positions, fifty-four if you counted jokers. Both the Gaucho and the Cowbo' community pride to match that of Francisco Francisco and the Cowboy fact, all one and the same person, and the a police informer.

Naturally, the police had something on in any one of his nobody hardly anybody becomes a snitch merely he believes performing a service while simultaneously enjoying a romance. What they had on Palacios a small tax-fraud violation that would have sent him to a federal prison for a good many years had chosen their option to arrest Palacios cheerfully accepted the go over him, and tried to lead an exemplary life. now and then a little something illegal hot CD players along with his dad's he figured there wasn't much more he could lose. With a few hanging over his head, else seemed minor.

Willis went to him not because he was a better than Fats actually Donner had a :ht edge when it came to providing information ... but only because over the years penchant had become more more unbearable; being in the same room w inhaling a mix of baby powder and spermicidal gel. The Co actually pleasant to be with. Moreover, Carlos Ortega was origin, and so was the Cowboy, whose shop was in a section Eight-

Seven known as El Infierno, which until the recent influx Jamaicans, Koreans and Vietnamese had been almost exclusively Rican.

He was combing his hair when Willis, soaking wet after a block run

from the bus stop, came into the back of the shop. High p way kids used to wear it back in the Fifties. Dark brown idol teeth. It was rumored in The Inferno that Palacios h which was also against the law, but they already had him fraud. One of the wives was supposed to have been a movie before Castro took over.

That had to put her in her fifties or sixties, Willis gue straight to the point.

"Carlos Ortega," he said.

"Gimme a break," Palacios said. "You in here with Spanish sound "Forty- two years old, ugly as homemade "What'd he do?"

"Nothing that we know of right now, not where he's supposed

"Where's that?" "1147 Hillside." "Tough neighborhood," B sort of comical in that he lived in anel that had racked corpses beginning of the year.

"He was busted on a drug charge," Willis "Did good time, October. He's very ugly, Cowboy, that might be where you nickel for everybody's ugly city..."

"Big bald guy, knife scar over his n partially closing. " Ortega," Palacios said.

Which is the way it went sometimes.

The one thing Palacios forgot to tell him was was a crack

"Here's where you'll find him," he said, and him an address
apartment number. If had known where he was going, he "mi
that the twelve-year-
old kid standi outside the building was a lookout.
As it was

ast him as innocent as the day is long, which maybe why t
challenge him. Or be it was because he didn't look at all

Five-

eight, slender and slight, wearing a sports shirt ;n at t
sleeves rolled up to his elbows, blue slacks, and scuffed
could have been anyone who lived here in a housing develo
blacks, whites, Hispanics and Asians lived side by side i
mix. The twelve-year-
old scarcely gave him a passing glance.

Still all unaware, Willis went into the lobby and took th
to the third floor. Apartment 37, Palacios had told him.
A kid of about sixteen or seventeen was lounging against
opposite the elevator doors. The moment Willis stepped ou
third floor corridor, he said, "You looking for something
white kid wearing a T-
shirt and jeans. The shirt had the call letters of
a rock radio station on it. You looking for something? An
the twelve-year-
old downstairs registered and Willis realized that the
Cowboy had sent him to a crack house.

"I'm supposed to meet Popeye Ortega," he said.

The kid nodded.

"You know the apartment number?"

"Yes," Willis said. "Thirty-seven."

"End of the hall," the kid said, and stepped out of his v

He didnot want to go in here as a cop. If he flashed the

would come down around his ears. But passing the scrutiny outside and a sixteen-year-old here in the was not quite the same thing as slipping through enemy lines. He thought at once should the joint under surveillance, back another time with a hi Popeye Ortega. i He went to the door of apartment 37, it.

A peephole opened.

"I'm supposed to meet Popeye Ortega," he If it worked once it might work It did. The door opened. The man standing was good-looking black man who a job playing the sidekick cop on a show. first thing he said was, "Have I seen you before?"

"No," Willis said.

"I didn't think so." "Popeye told me to meet him here."

"He's upstairs. What can I get you?"

"Nothing right now," Willis said.

The man-looked at him.

I'll just go talk to him," Willis said, and past him into Kitchen on the Dead ahead, in what would have been the room men sat a table. One. black, white, one Hispanic. Crack pipe. Butane torch. Butane fuel. Crack vials. cream-colored rocks in a vial, cost you five and in L.A., fifteen in D.C., the nation's Good for an instant high that lasted ut thirty minutes. T back in the again till your next hit.

On the Coast, they called it rock. In D.C., they it Piece Mountain. In this city, there were a dozen different names made the ;tuff in your own kitchen. You mixed cocaine der baking soda and you stirred it till you had a thick paste cooked the paste on your stove and you let it dry out until a round bar of soap. You broke it into chips. Another name. If you were a roller, you packaged it and sold it under your name. If you used made from coke powder that had already some deadly shit like ephedrine or amphetamine, you could morgue.

Users like to know what there were smoking. They looked for
they could count on. Lucky Eleven. Or Mister J. Or Royal
Paradise. Or Tease Me.

Actually, you didn't smoke the stuff, you inhaled it.

Although you could crunch up the rocks, and sprinkle them
marijuana cigarette. You called this "whoolie," the pot
crack, and it was one way you could actually smoke the pr

But you didn't normally burn it the way you burned tobacco.
Normally, you melted it.

The three young men at the table were go.

They were each holding a glass pipe. This resembled a real
glass sl

resembled a real slipper. The "pipe" was fast of a clear
two glass tubes from it on opposite sides at right angles
vertical, one horizontal. It looked more laboratory instr
smoking You expected to see it over a Bunsen burner, some
scientist's evil brew boiling in bowl was about the size
ball, and it hole in it through which water could be pour

glass tube was about five inches long, diameter of half a
You wedged rocks each rock weighed about a milligrams into
the vertical glass which after very few uses became black
the horizontal glass tube in your mouth, you picked up the
torch... "Beam me up, Scotty," one of the young said.

Intent on what they were doing now.

flame into the tube. The rocks beginning to Sucking the v
the water in the pipe. Up through the other glass tube, I
inhale the vapors, a five-
second from the lungs to the brain, and
whammo!

The equivalent of an orgasm, most addicts said.

Rapture.

Euphoria.

In laboratory tests, rats ignored electric shocks to at t doses, chose cocaine over food, se it over sex, allowed i the very course their lives. By the end of a month, nine were dead.

Willis watched the young men sucking up death.

The crack house was in actuality three separate ;nts on t third and fourth floors of building. The floor and ceiling third-

floor :nt had been broken through and ladders set to allo to the second floor below and the floor above. There were on floor, of course, but anyone wanting to come in and sm time had to come in on the third floor, where he paid his vial and his pipe. The three-level arrangement also served a more practical purpose. In the event of a raid, the second and could be emptied in a flash while the cops milled about o floor of the dope sandwich.

He found Popeye Ortega on the fourth floor.

He was sitting at a table in the far corner of the second looking through a rain-lashed window, at least a dozen empty vials of crack spread on the table top before him. Willis did not he'd been here. He looked as if he had not changed his cl in days, and he Smelled of the stench of his own urine. H through the window at the rain outside, as if viewing som streaked greyness and images mere mortals could not see.

"Ortega?" Willis said.

"Scotty got dee chip, man," he said.

He was, in truth, as ugly as Marilyn had des him, as ugly and/or his the Buenos Aires documents and the I.S.

But there was something missing here.

Willis stepped out of the room, opened in the hallway, an cool, clean fresh rain to sweep into the apartment. He wa

came down from his high, he would question him. But he al that the man sitting in there, staring window and stinkin piss, could the same man who was threatening What was mis man was the Marilyn had described. The huge ugly man in h lost all sense of direction, drive. Crack had stolen his was effect, already dead.

Willis took a cigarette from the package in pocket, light stood by the window on it, looking out at the rain, wonder be before Ortega surfaced. He could voices from downstairs the hole had been cut in the ceiling. The good-looking man greeting a customer. Willis figured that he was here, and just so it total he might as well ruffle a few feathers. He went lac the third floor. He walked past the young men sitting at had been by a fourth man, who was at that very moment up. China in the 1800s, Willis thought. This has to be a nati addicts. This has to be the disgrace of the planet. This America that makes you ashamed.

The good-looking black man was sitting at a table in the kitchen.

Willis walked in with his gun in one hand and his shield

"What's this?" the black man said. "What do you think it asked.

"Hey, come on, man."

"Meaning what?"

"Meaning you know."

"No, I don't know. Tell me."

"Come on, man."

Meaning, of course, that the fix was in. As simple as tha on, man, this has been taken care of, huh? Go talk to you they tell you let it slide, huh, man? With the numbers in drug trade, there would always be somebody letting it sli looking the other way.

"What's your name?" Willis asked.

"Come on, man."

"What's your fucking name?"

"Warren Jackson."

"Mind if I use your phone, Warren?"

"You steppin' in deep shit, man."

"Wait'll you see what you're steppin' in," said, and yanked from the wall dialed the precinct number. Charlie-car showed five minutes. The driver looked surprised. So man tiding shotg them knew Willi..

"Gee, Hal," one of them said, "when did thi spring up?"

"Surprises every day of the week," Willis Warren Jackson both Charlie-car cops. Willis figured they were both the deal. Partner Helping Young America its fucking brains out.

"More detectives on the way " he conversationally.

"Good," the shotgun cop said.

"You know Detective Meyer? He's on the "Oh, sure," the dr
"Meyer Meyer. bald guy, right?"

"Right. He's got young kids."

Both cops looked at him.

"He has a thing about crack," Willis said, pleasantly.

So far Warren Jackson wasn't saying He was possibly waiting to tell to fuck off. But nobody was doing it. Not yet. y addicts sitting around the table something was going on, so far out! it, so high up on the third moon of the plane Romitar that they figured maybe guys in blue uniforms were standing there with the big black eunuch and the short cu

haired
jester, all of them guarding the Emperor Pleth's harem, the
movie.

"Where's your sergeant?" Warren said at last.

This was Charlie Sector, the Patrol Sergeant's name was M
a big redheaded red-
faced hairbag who'd been on the force since Hector
was a pup. It was entirely possible that Harrigan was in
Maybe every cop in the sector was in on it, including the
the beat.

"Call your fuckin' sergeant," Warren said, "tell him. we
misunderstandin' here."

The Charlie-
car cops looked at each other. They were trying to figure
what the protocol was here.

They knew their Patrol Sergeant outranked Willis, but if
matter for Internal Affairs, rank didn't mean a goddamn t
Willis himself was in on the deal. In which case... "Sure
Willis said.

They figured he wasn't in on the deal.

"Go ahead," Willis said.

The shotgun cop's name was Larry Fitzhenry. He raised Har
walkie-
talkie and asked him could he please, Sarge, stop by this
apartment here on Ainsley and Fifth, apartment 37, Sarge,
seems to be some sort of misunderstanding here? Harrigan
right over. His voice sounded noncommittal. Over the years
learned that you should never trust anyone Mickey unless
was Mouse.

Meyer got there before Harrigan did.

He did not like what he saw. Willis took him and told him
proprietor was blow the whistle. He figured some uniforms
the fan, at least one of them dec with a gold shield. Mey
annoyed. The Charlie-

car cops looked nervous. Warren Jackson was getting angrier over the untrustworthiness of the department.

When Harrigan showed up, he said, this ? What is this ?" told him to get his men in this wasn't what three grand a

Harrigan told the detectives he didn't know the fuck Jack about.

Meyer said, "You're full of shit, Mickey."

Willis went upstairs to talk to Ortega.

Shad Russell refused to discuss it on the When they met I night, at a on The Stem, he told her why.

"It occurs to me that perhaps you're setting up," he said

This was already nine o'clock. The rush had peaked, but n people were ;gling in and taking seats at tables near the could watch the springtime rain the sidewalk outside. The things this city that were nice.

"You still think I'm a cop, huh?" she said.

"Or working for the cops, yes," he said.

"Setting you up for what?"

"First for dealing guns and next for dealing dope."

"Don't be ridiculous," she said.

"Maybe I am being ridiculous," he said, and shrugged. "Bu not."

"I thought you called Houston.'" "

"I did."

"I thought you talked to Sam Seward, how could I be a cop

"Maybe he's in their pocket, too, the Houston cops. And n you sewed up here, the cops here. All I know is first you

looking to buy a gun, and next thing I know you've got fi
and you wanna buy dope. To me, that sounds like a setup."

"Well, it isn't."

"For all I know you're wired. For all I know, you got a m
between your knockers. I set up a drug buy for you, I end
holding cell."

"I'm not wired."

"Prove it."

"How?"

"Strip," he said.

She looked at him.

She sighed heavily.

"So we're back to that again, huh?" she "No, we're not ba
again," mimicking her, "get your fuckin' mind out gutter.
lady friend of mine, we place, you strip for her, not me.
clean, we talk."

"Did you find a deal for me?" "No strippee, no talkee," h

"I cashed that check today," she said.

Shad looked at her and said nothing.

"I've got five hundred thousand in hundre bills."

Still he said nothing.

"Come on, don't be a jackass," she said.

"Lady," he said, and stood up, "it was meeting you."

"Sit down," she said.

"My friend lives on Darrow," he said. "Nei old Franklin T
Yes or no?—"

Marilyn was shaking her head in amazement; "Yes or no?" S

Russell's lady friend was a hooker, for sure, but apartme
well-

furnished, and guessed she worked solo. Her name or it le
by which she introduced herself Joanne. This was a common
Like Tracy or Julie or Deborah. She looked to be in her
thirties, but

Marilyn guessed she was at least a decade younger. She to
could undress in the bathroom.

The bathroom was spotlessly clean. Through force of habit
checked out the medicine cabinet and found several bottle
three boxes of condoms, and a bottle of Johnson's Baby Oi
her clothes and folded them neatly on the small wooden ta
the sink.

There were two robes hanging on the back of the door. Mar
of them. Silk. The aroma of perfume clinging to it. Somet
recognized but could not for the life of her name. Not a

She fastened the sash at her waist and came out into the
only the robe and her own high-heeled pumps.

Joanne looked at the robe and said, "Make yourself at hom
you?"

"Sorry, I thought..."

"You mind taking it off, please?"

Shad was sitting on the edge of the bed.

Marilyn looked at him.

"This is a search," Joanne said, "take off the fuckin' ro

Shad got up, and went into the other room.

Marilyn took off the robe. Joanne looked her up and .down

"Nice," she said.

"Thanks."

"Your own?"

"Yes." "Nice," she said again. "Turn around." turned.

"Nice," Joanne said again. "You gay?"

"No."

"Bi?"

"No."

"That's a shame. Take off the shoes, Marilyn slipped out Joanne them up, felt inside each of them, tested each see slide it away from the body shoe, and then handed the sho

I'll check your clothes," she said, and went the bathroom

Marilyn put the robe on again, and sat on the of the bed, crossed. She desperately a cigarette. In the bathroom, Jo article of clothing the skirt, the blouse, the bra,. slip and patted them down. opened Marilyn's handbag, then, and found the .38.

"Shad sold that to me," Marilyn said.

"I don't want to know," Joanne said, continued rummaging bag. At last, snapped the bag shut, said, I'll tell him o dress now," and went oui into living room. Marilyn went i bathroom, for her package of cigarettes, immediately one, closed and locked the door. In room, she could hear their voices.

puffing on the cigarette and resting it on edge of the si silently, and then flushed the cigarette down the toilet. walked out into the living room, Joanne was gone.

"She said we can talk here," Shad said.

"Fine."

"Sit down."

"Thanks."

He was sitting on a sofa covered with a pale blue fabric. a Van Gogh poster, all yellows and oranges and bolder blue chair opposite his, crossed her legs. At the far end of the room, a window looked out onto the street. The window was closed, but the wind had just lashed the window.

"What'd you think of her?" he asked.

"Nice lady," she said.

"She told me she'd like to go down on you."

"Sorry, I'm not interested." "You're a difficult person," she sighed.

"Shad, can we talk business? Please?"

"That is her business," he said, and smiled the crocodile smile. "I'm glad you were clean. It really bothered me to think that you were a fuzz."

"Good, now let's get on with it. Have you found...?"

"Did you really cash that check?"

"Yes."

"Half a mill in hundreds, huh?"

"Yes."

"What'd they say?"

"What do you mean?"

"What'd you tell them? Why you wanted C-notes."

"They didn't ask."

"But didn't you feel funny? Getting all that in hundred-dollar bills?"

"I told them I was buying an antique vase, man wouldn't a

but cash"

"An antique vase, huh?"

"Yes. Ming Dynasty."

"Ming Dynasty, huh?"

"Museum quality."

"And they bought that, huh?"

"I'm a regular customer at the bank, they asked me why I

"But you told them, anyway, huh?"

"Yes."

"Because you felt funny, right?"

"No, because it was an unusual transaction."

"And because you used to be a hooker, n Marilyn looked at

The rain beat a steady tattoo on the window.

"I can understand why you walked easy," he "I wasn't walk
said. "The knows me. But I felt my request was a bit..."

"But they don't know you used to be a hooker, Big smile o
Little man with a big and a big secret. She wished he'd g
kept coming back to it, the blonde used to be hooker, wha

"So did you find a deal for me?" she asked.

"Yes," he said, "I found a deal for you."

"Good. Who?"

"A man up from Colombia, I done deals with him

"

"When will it be?"

"He'll have the eleven keys by tomorrow night."

"Good. Did you tell him I wanted to pick the place?" "I t
didn't like it but..."

Shad shrugged and smiled again.

"Did you tell him one-on-
one?" "I told him. He agreed to it."

"Where'd you leave it?"

"He'll call me tomorrow night, when he's got the stuff to
you, you tell me where you want him to come, he'll be the
minutes, provided it ain't in Siam."

"What's his name?"

"Why do you need to know that?"

"I guess I don't."

"You guess right, you don't. All you need is the money."

"After I've got the stuff..."

"Yeah, well, first you gotta get it."

"Yes. But after I have it, how long do you think it'll ta
around?"

"Depends on who I can find. Two days Somebody to step on
you know "Yes."

"And then somebody else'll take it off hands. All in time
days."

"Because the thing is, I haven't got much you see."

"I figured."

"I'm getting a lot of pressure, you see."

"Mmm."

"So the sooner we can turn it around, the I'll be." "Oh,
"But first you gotta m buy, don't you?"

"Yes. But that's tomorrow night."

"Provided," Shad said.

"What do you mean provided? You tomorrow night, didn't yo

"Yeah, to meet him."

"Yes."

"Test the stuff, taste it..."

"Yes."

"Which you don't know how to do, right?"

"Well,.. that shouldn't be a problem. You you'd..." "Yeah
teach you."

"Yes."

"To taste it," he said, and smiled.

She looked at him.

A fresh wind swept torrents of rain against the vindow.

"You really want me to put you in touch with this
guy, don't you?" he said.

Smiling.

She kept looking at him.

"Well, don't you?" he said.

"You know I do."

"Because this deal is very important to you, right?" "Yes

"Very important," he said.

"Yes."

"Sure."

Smiling.

"Well, don't worry about it," he said.

"Everything'll be all right."

"I hope so," she said.

"Oh, sure," he said. "Provided."

His eyes met hers.

The rain and the wind rattled the window.

"Come here, baby," he said, and began unzipping his fly.

She went immediately to the door.

It was locked.

A dead bolt.

The key gone.

In prison that first time, the door had been locked from
The warden El Alcaide, a squat little man wearing jodhpurs
brown-

leather boots, a riding crop in his hand had asked raise
for him. She'd run to the was locked. She'd twisted the u
again and again, shouting English and then "Socorro.t'" i
coming up behind her, the riding crop raised.

Never again, she thought.

She took the .38 from her handbag. "Unlock the door," she

He looked at the gun in her fist.

"Now," she said.

"You're a hooker," he said. "What's blowjob more or...9"

She almost shot him dead on the spot minute. Her finger a millimeter on the trigger, she almost s brains on the wall turned to the leveled the gun at it, and fired repeatedly splintering the area around the lock. bolt upright on the words cut off explosions, his eyes saucer wide, his fly M the knob, and pulled open the tearing the latch assembly tattered bolt still engaged in the doorframe's striker "M cops," he said, petulantly.

"Good," she said. "You explain it to them."

Doors were opening all up and down the Curious tenants wh hooker lived and who were expecting trouble sooner or lat rainy spring night. She walked past them, and went down t out into the street. People who had heard the shots were the front stoop. She could hear a police siren in the dis walked away swiftly, through the rain.

She was thinking that now she'd have to kill the two men

The two detectives stood before Lieutenant desk like a pa apprehensive schoolboys be birched by the headmaster. The still raining that Thursday did little to help pervasive impending doom. This was last day of May. It was now two five hours, the priest would have been dead full week.

Silvery rainsnakes slithered down each of lieutenant's co the grey beyond duller than the grey of his hair, which w short-

cropped but growing increasingly whiter the years. Frowni sat behind his desk, folded in front of him. The knuckles legacy from his youthful days as a street fi His shaggy w lowered over blue eyes. The rain oozed on either side of

"Let me hear it," he said.

"I went to see Bobby Corrente late last night," Carella s already out on bail..."

"Naturally."

"... I found him at home with his parents. I figured since I got him for tearing a church apart and assaulting a priest, I might as well get him for this, too, yes." Bymes said impatiently.

"But he's got an alibi for the night of the murder."

"A reliable witness?"

"His father." "Worthless," Byrnes said.

"Hooper's got an alibi, too," Hawes said. "I talked to him this morning."

"Who's his witness?"

"His sister."

"Also worthless," Byrnes said.

"But they both knew there was crack hidden inside..."

"Where was it, by the way?"

"In the holy water urn."

"Jesus," Byrnes said, and shook his head. "How about the one you found that yet?"

"Not anywhere in the church. And we've searched it a hundred times already. The point is, if either Hooper or Corrente went to the dope house, they'd have found it."

"Except you're just telling me they've both got alibis."

"Which you're telling me are worthless," Carella said.

"Which they are," Byrnes said. "What about Farnes' character?"

"Farnes, yes."

"What's his alibi?"

"His inventory log," Carella said.

"Which he himself dated," Hawes said.

"So far you're giving me nothing but alibis aren't alibis," Byrnes said. "What else have got?"

"Only more alibis that aren't alibis," Carella said. "This guy's the star..."

"His name again?"

"Hobbs. Andrew Hobbs. He claims he was in with a man named Meyer on the night of murder."

"Terrific."

"We haven't been able to locate his mother..."

"Her name?"

"Abigail. I guess. He calls her Abby, I call her Abigail."

"Okay, Abigail Hobbs, what about her?"

"She went to Father Michael for help. We want to ask her just what this made him."

"The son?" "Yeah. Meyer says he was still pissed about the fact that he was stabbed seventeen times, Pete. anger."

"Agreed. So find her."

"We're trying."

"What about the secretary?" Byrnes asked.

"What about her?" Hawes said.

Defensively, it seemed to Carella.

"Could she have been the one the priest was diddling?" "I

so," Hawes said.

"On what do you base that?"

"Well... she just doesn't seem like the sort of person who's involved in something like that."

Byrnes looked at him.

"She just doesn't," Hawes said, and shrugged.

"The Class Valedictorian, right?" Byrnes said.

"What?" Hawes said.

"Brightest kid in the class, handsome as can be, witty, and his mother, his father, both his sisters and his pet goldfish didn't seem like that sort of person. Right?"

"Well..." "Don't give me seems," Byrnes said. "And don't tell me aren't any secretaries who fool around with their bosses." "She was and what she was doing on the night of the murder," Hawes said.

"And locate this gay guy's mother, Hobbs, find out what she's all about." "Yes, sir," Carella said.

"So do it," Byrnes said.

A good time to visit a church devoted to worshipping the Virgin on a rainy day,, guessed. As he came up the street, he saw the old soot-

stained stones had first and very long ago been a Catholic church and then a storehouse for grain during the war and briefly a warehouse and then a w for sewing machines, and then a convenient fire station. The shows and crafts shows neighborhood began crumbling every day. It was The Church of the Bornless though nothing advised the observer fact.

He saw only wet, sootened stones a gunmetal sky, the outline of a building that to squat on its haunches ready to pounce, the flying buttresses. He climbed flat steps to the entrance and turned the knobs doors. Both were locked. He went around the what he called the rectory door. A bell was set into the stone. A tarnish

it read Ring for Service. He rang for And waited in the r

The woman who answered the door had blonde hair, a button with freckles, eyes the color of cobalt. She was wearing white T-shirt with a tiny red devil's discreet logo over the left breast. Carella fi he'd come to the right place.

"Yes?" she said.

"I'm looking for Mr. Lutherson," he said, and ,wed her hi his I.D. card.

"You're not the one we spoke to," she said.

"No, I'm not," Carella admitted. "May I come in, .,ase? I wet out here."

"Oh, yes," she said, "excuse me, come in, come in, please

She stepped back and away from him. She was barefoot, he were standing in what was a small oval entrance foyer fas and lined with niches similar to the ones at St. Catherin that these were devoid of statues.

"Didn't Andrew Hobbs come talk to you?" she asked at once

"Not to me personally," Carella said. "But, yes, he did s

"Then you know he's the one who..."

"Yes, painted the star."

"The pentagram, yes."

"Yes." "Let me tell Sky you're here," she said. "What was again?"

"Carella. Detective Carell."

I'll tell him," she said, and turned and went padding off gloom.

He waited in the foyer. Outside a water spout splashed no

wondered what they did here.

He wondered if they were breaking any laws here.

You read stories about all these sensational ritual murder killing people for the Devil, you began to think the whole Satan. Slitting the throats of little babes, their blood sacrificial basins. Most of these sacrificed chickens or any of them foolish enough or reckless enough to human sacrifice this city, there were no such against sacrificing animals that tossing a lobster into a pot of boiling wasn't sacrifice. There were, however, against inhumane methods of slaughter in a mood to bust a cult that animal sacrifice, you could call them bullshit violation. He was not here to bust a cult, to learn a bit more about... "Mr. Carella?"

He turned.

A tall blond man had materialized in the doorway stepping from beyond one of the portals. Like the woman who'd answered wearing jeans and the white T-shirt the devil's-head logo. He, too, was barefoot. body of a weight lifter, lean and clean, Carella bet next month's salary that this cat done time. A bend in the perfect where it had once been broken. A Mick mouth. Pearl Eyes as blue as woman's had been, were they brother and sister?

"I'm Schuyler Lutherson," he said, smiling "welcome to The Bornless One."

He extended his hand. Carella took it, and took hands briefly. Lutherson's grip was firm and dry. Carella had read somewhere firm, dry grip was a sign of character. As opposed to a limp hand guessed. He was willing to bet another month's salary that the murderers in this world had firm, dry grips.

"Come on inside," Lutherson said, and led him through an antechamber opposite the one through which he'd entered, and down a series of more empty niches in the walls, and then opened a heavy door that led into a wood-paneled room that had once been a library, but which was now lined only with empty shelves. A thrift-shop desk was in the center of the room. There was a chair behind it and two chairs in

A standing floor lamp with a cream-colored shade was in one corner of the room. Lutherson sat behind the desk. Carella sat opposite.

"So," Lutherson said. "I hope you're making progress with

Hands tented, fingers and thumbs gently touching. Looking over his hands. Smiling pleasantly.

"Not very much," Carella said.

"I'm sorry to hear that. I thought when we offered our cooperation would at least, see, clear up any doubts along those lines here at Bornless might be involved, see. In the murder of

"Uh-huh," Carella said.

"Which is why we asked him to go to the Hobbs. The minute he was who'd defaced that gate."

"As a matter of fact, he's the reason I'm here today."

"Oh?"

Blue eyes opening wide.

"Yes. We've been trying to locate his mother but we can't find a listing for her, and "Why don't you ask Hobbs?"

"We did. He doesn't know."

"He doesn't know his own mother's telephone number?"

"They don't get along. She moved six months ago, and neither of them has any contact each other since."

"Well, I wish I could help you, but..."

"Did Hobbs ever mention her to you?"

"No. In fact, the first time I ever spoke to him was last Saturday."

"I thought he was a regular member of congregation. According to the records, Sachs..."

"Yes, I know Jer..."

"... he introduced Hobbs to your church in sometime."

"I do know Jeremy, and that may be true. people come and transient group. A of people are attracted by the novelty they realize that this is a serious religion here, we're worshippers here, and they drop "But you'd never talked to last Saturday."

"Correct."

"You'd seen him here, though, hadn't you?"

"Not that I can recall. But I'm sure if Jeremy says lae's here since March, then I have no reason to doubt his word that I wasn't familiar with him personally."

"And so you wouldn't have any information about his mother?"

"No."

"Abigail Hobbs."

"No. I'm sorry."

"You wouldn't have met her..."

"How would I have met her?"

"Well, she could have come here in an attempt to..."

"No, I've never met anyone named Abigail Hobbs."

"I guess you'd remember if she came here."

"Yes, I'm sure I'd remember."

"Before going to see Father Michael. To ask you to talk to convince him to leave the church, whatever. You don't remember like that, is that right?"

"Nothing like that, no. I can say very definitely that I

anyone named Abigail Hobbs."

"Well, thank you, Mr. Lutherson," Carella said, and sighed. "I appreciate your time."

"Not at all. Feel free to stop in whenever you like," Lutherson said, and rose from behind and extended his hand again.

The men shook hands. Finn and dry, the the Devil's disciple.

"I'll show you out," Lutherson said, Carella thought happened in movies.

She'd told him she was going to a cattle-call that afternoon and that he could meet her Alice Weiss Theater downtown at about o'clock. At that time she hoped she'd be Hawes waited under the theater marquee during the falling rain, watching the rushing past on their way home, and He wanted to be going home, too. Instead, he here waited for Krissie Lund.

Right after their meeting in the lieutenant's Carella had met Alexis O'Donnell a blonde woman with Father Michael on Sunday. Whether or not the blonde had been was yet another matter; there were many blondes in this world, including Alexis herself. bothered her. It might have been. whoever the blonde was, Father Michael had been paid blackmail. And blackmail, known as extortion, was defined in Section 850! the state's Penal Law as "the obtaining of from another person a wrongful use of force fear." And listed under the threats that constituted extortion was: To expose any secret affecting the honor or

If, for example, the blonde arguing with Father Michael had threatened to expose his love affair unless he paid her a substantial sum of money or gave her property worth money. In the country, a diamond bracelet, an Arabian show horse this was blackmail.

This is blackmail, the priest had shouted.

According to Alexis O'Donnell.

Who had seen a blonde.

Blackmail, or extortion, was punishable by a max of fifteen years.

A long stretch up the river if you threatened to tattletale u
paid you off. Which potential stay in the country often p
reason for murder. Most often, of course, it was the inte
murdered his blackmailer. Better murder than exposure. Bu
victim threw all caution to the winds and threatened to r
blackmail attempt? Oh, yeah? Take this, you dirty rotten

Not so funny when it happened in real life.

If Alexis O'Donnell had heard and seen correctly, a blond
Father Michael on Easter Sunday, and she had threatened h
he'd considered blackmail. If that blonde was Krissie Lun
you been waiting long?" she said, and took his arm.

Carella was waiting outside the First Fi, Savings and Tru
Hobbs came the bank at a quarter past five that afternoon
an umbrella, he pulled up the his raincoat, ducked his he
into the teeming rain.

"Mr. Hobbs?" Carella said, and fell into beside him. "I'm
bother you again..." "Yes, well, you are," Hobbs said.

"But we've been unable to reach your mother "I don't want
another word about bitch."

The rain was relentless. Both men virtu galloped through
obviously intent reaching the subway kiosk on the corner,
to keep up. When at last the' reached the sanctuary of th
Carella grabbed Hobbs's arm, turned him and somewhat angri
up a minute, you?"

Hobbs was reaching into his trouser pocket subway token.
was plastered to forehead, his raincoat, trouser legs, an
thoroughly soaked. He shook off Carella's impatiently, fo
glanced toward platform to see if a train was coming in,
said, "What is it you want from me?"

"Your mother's phone number."

Sodden, homeward-

bound commuters rushed past on their way to the token
booth and the turnstiles. Standing against the graffiti-
sprayed tile

wall some four or five yards away were two young men, one playing acoustic guitar very badly, the other sitting again with a cardboard sign hanging around his neck. The sign read HOMELESS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP. Hobbs glanced again to the platform, and then turned back to Carella and said in the same voice, "I don't have her number, I already told you that. Look it up in the damn phone book?"

"We have, she's not listed."

"Don't be ridiculous. Abby not listed? Abby taking the ridiculous phone call from a man?"

Really."

"Mr. Hobbs," Carella said, "your mother was one of the people in contact with Father Michael in the several weeks before he died. I like to talk to her."

"You don't think she killed him, do you?"

"We don't know who killed him, Mr. Hobbs."

"We're merely exploring every possibility."

"Wouldn't that be a hoot! Abby killing the asshole who was supposed to save me from the Devil!"

"The point is..."

And here Carella launched into a somewhat creative improvisation that the real reason he wanted to talk to Abigail Hobbs was to avoid her son's anger and his potential violence... "... whatever reason he may have for her, however unimportant it might be at the time, it may be of enormous value to me now, in retrospect, if it sheds light on the past that could conceivably relate to the thought that he might have a insignificant."

Hobbs tried to digest this.

Then he said, "You're not suggesting he has confided in me. Because frankly, Mr. Carella, that would be tantamount to a cobra constrictor."

"We won't know until we talk to her, will Carella said.

"Don't you people have ways of getting numbers?"

"We do. And we tried them. The phone doesn't have a listing for the city anyone named Abigail Hobbs." "Small wonder," Hobbs smiled.

Carella looked at him.

"Her name isn't Abigail Hobbs."

"Your mother's name..." "She divorced my father ten years ago." "She's been using her maiden name ever since."

The hotel had a French name but its staff was strictly American. The maitre d' in what was called the Caf du Bois said, "Excuse me, mess-

yes, will there be two for drinks?" Hawes didn't feel particularly transported to Gay Paree. The maitre showed him through a room with birch trees under a glass canopy, usually nourished by sun but today when the rain was beating steadily overhead. At the end of the lounge a man was playing French-sounding songs on the piano. Krissie slung her shoulder bag over the back of the chair, sat, thanked him, and said, "I have to call my agent when I get a minute. She'll let you know how it went." On the way here in the rain, she'd told him they'd asked her to read two scenes rather than the one she'd been asked all the other actresses to read.

She considered this a good sign. Hawes said he hoped she'd call. He ordered drinks for both of them now -- gin and tonic for Krissie, requested, and a Diet Pepsi for himself since he was still on a diet, and then he said, "There are some questions I have to ask you. I hope you don't mind."

"Don't look so serious," she said.

"I want you to tell me, first of all, where you were between twenty and twenty-three and seven-thirty on the night of May twenty-fourth." "Oh, my," she said, and rolled her eyes.

serious, isn't it?"

"Yes."

"That's when Father Michael was killed, "Yes."

"And you want to know where I..."

"Where you were while he was being killed, "My, my." "Yes"

"What are you going to ask next? Was I affair with him?"

"Were you?" "As for where I was that night," she said, "I minute." "Please do," he said.

"Because I write down everything in appointment calendar, swung shoulder bag around so that she could reach into, a binder book with black covers. "Although I can't say I ap inviting me for a drink under false pretenses."

"Krissie," he said wearily, "I'm investigating murder."

"Then you should have told me on the phone this was a bus

"I told you I..." "You said you wanted to see me," she an pages, "not that you wanted to me to question me. Here," "May," she "let's see what I was doing on the twenty-fourth, r''

The waiter came back to the table.

"The gin and tonic?" he asked.

"The lady," Hawes said.

It occurred to him that she had not yet said whether or r having an affair with Father Michael.

The waiter put down her drink, and then turned to Hawes a Diet Pepsi," giving him a look that indicated real men dr "Enjoy your drinks, folks," he said, and smiled pleasantly off. At the other end of the room, the piano player was p about going away.

Krissie took a sip of her drink and turned immediately to
again.

"May twenty-fourth," she said.

Hawes waited.

"To begin with, the twenty-
fourth was a Thursday, so I was working that
day, I worked at the church on Tuesdays and Thursdays, re

"Yes."

"Which meant I was there from nine to five, so my first a
at five-
thirty, do you see it " here?" she said, "with Ellie, her
name, turning the book so Hawes could see it. "That's my
Weinberger Associates, I met her at The Red Balloon at fi
thirty."

"Okay," Hawes said. He was already reading ahead in the o
for Thursday, the

twenty-
fourth of May. On that day, Krissie's appointment was...
eight o'clock, I met this man for was putting together an
Broadway
famous vaudeville skits, and he wanted to talk about dire
them. I've never before, this would have been a wonder op
me. His name is Harry met him at a restaurant called..., o
Eight P.M., Harry Grundle, Turner's? That's was."

"What time did you leave your agent?"

"Around six-thirty."

"Where's The Red Balloon?"

"On the Circle."

"Where'd you go when you left her?"

"Home to bathe and change for my dinner "And where's Turn

"In the Quarter. Near my apartment, actually."

"Do you drive a car?"

"No."

"How'd you get from one place to the other?"

"By subway from the church to The Red I took a taxi home, from my Turner's."

"Do you remember what you were wearing?"

"I wore a cotton dress to work and to meet Then I changed dressier."

"Like what?"

"A blue suit, I think. Also cotton. It was a very hot day"

"What color was the dress you wore to work?"

"Blue."

"Both blue, is that it?"

"It's my favorite color," she said, and closed the book.

He was thinking that it would not have taken more than two subway from the church to Grover Park Circle. If she'd left six-

thirty, as she said she had, she could have been back uptown by ten minutes to seven. The priest was killed sometime ago she'd still have had time to taxi downtown to meet Grundl

He was also thinking that he would have to check with Mrs. get a description of the dress Krissie had been wearing that day, and he would have to look up Harry Grundle to ask he been wearing that night. Because if she hadn't gone home to change her clothes... "How about Easter Sunday?" he said. "calendar have anything for Easter Sunday?"

"I don't like you when you're this way," she said.

"What way?"

"Like every shitty cop I've ever met in my life." "Sorry, I am a cop."

"You don't have to be a shitty one."

"Where were you on Easter Sunday between two-thirty and three P.M.?"

"You know, it occurs to me that maybe I ou have a lawyer

"Shall I read you your rights?" he asked, and a smile. But something that truly him here. Not that she had no real a and a half between six-thirty and eight on twenty-fourth of May, but

because her attitude become so very defensive the moment questions. Maybe his technique was rol maybe that was it.

"I really don't think you need a lawyer," he "Do you know on Easter "Yes, of course I know where I was," she and fl open again, and said, the hell was Easter Sunday?"

"The fifteenth, I think. Of April."

"I'm pretty sure I was in the country. My have a house in I'm pretty sure I s Easter with them." She kept flipping came to April.

"The fifteenth," she said, almost to herself.

"Yes," he said.

"I have nothing for that day," she said, and up. "That's could swear I went to country. I can't imagine being alone Unless I was in rehearsal for something. which case..." S the book agai0. sure, here it is. I did a showcase on the night. I was probably learning lines Sunday before because see it?

rehearsals began the next day, Monday the sixteenth, " here.

She was tapping the calendar box with her forefinger.

Rehearsal, the entry read.

YMCA. 7:00 P.M. "Was anyone with you?" he asked.

"Oh, yes. We were rehearsing a scene from a new play, the least..."

"On Easter. While you were learning your lines."

"I believe I was alone."

"No one to cue you?"

"No, I believe I was alone."

"You didn't go up to St. Catherine's that day, did you?"

"Why would I do that?"

"I have no idea. Did you?"

"No."

"What was your relationship with Father Michael?"

"I wasn't having an affair with him, if we're back to that."

"Was there ever anything between you that went beyond a business relationship?" "Yes," she said, surprising him.

"In what way?" he asked.

"I found him extremely attractive. And I suppose..., if I'm perfectly honest with myself... I suppose I flirted with him on occasion."

"Flirted how?"

"Well, the walk..., you know."

"What walk?"

"Well, you know how women walk when want to attract attention."

"Uh-huh."

"And eye contact, I guess. And an oc show of leg, like the know how flirt." "Are you Catholic?" he asked.

"No."

"So you found it perfectly okay, I guess, to with a priest angry," she said, and smiled at "No, I'm not angry, I'm s to..."

"But you sound angry."

"It was okay to flirt with a priest, is that right? walk, contact, the occasional show of isn't that what you called. That was perfectly okay."

"Oh, come on, we've all had that fantasy, we? Nuns? Priests think The Birds was all about, if not wanting to go to bed. Didn't you read The Thorn Birds?" "No," he said.

"Or see the miniseries?"

"No." .

"Only everybody in the entire worm saw miniseries."

"But not me. Was that your fantasy? Wanting to go to bed Michael?"

"I thought about it, yes."

"And apparently acted on it."

"Acting's a pretty good word for it, actually."

Because in many ways it was almost like playing Meggie in Birds. Or Sadie Thompson in Rain, do you know Rain? I did last year.

You have to try all sorts of parts, you know, if you want your natural talent. These women involved with priests are interesting. Or the Bette Davis character in Of Human Bondage.

know that one? He's not a priest, of course, he's a cripple sort of the same thing, isn't it? Not that I'm suggesting cripple, but only that he's a person handicapped by his v give vent to his natural instincts or desires, his urges he's bound by these vows he's made, he's handicapped in t well, he is sort of crippled, actually. So it was..., well interesting.

To be playing this sort of part, and to... well... observe reactions. It made the job more interesting. I mean, the boring, you know. This made it interesting." "Sure," Hawe

Actresses, he thought.

"But it never went beyond that," he said.

"Never."

"You never..." "Well," she said, and hesitated.

He waited.

"I could see he was interested, you know."

"Uh-huh."

"I mean..., he was aware of me, let's put it way."

"Uh-huh."

"Watching me, you know."

"Uh-huh."

"Aware of me."

She sipped at her drink, and then loo] thoughtfully into if searching for under the lime and the ice cubes.

"I have to admit," she said, and again "If he'd made the move..., if he'd that single step beyond..., you know..., lo have gone all the way. Because, I'll tell the truth, I'm honest with you, scared to death of sex these days. Becau been to bed with anyone in the past I'm telling you the a

And I thou and maybe this is why I started it, the-
flirting, know... I
thought at least this would be safe.

with a priest would be completely safe."

She looked up into his face.

Her eyes met his.

"I don't know," she said, "do you think terrible?"

"Yes," he said.

But that didn't mean she'd killed him.

"I'll just get the check," he said.

Abigail Finch was a beautiful blonde woman wearing yellow
black leotard top, and high-
heeled black leather pumps that added a good
three inches to her already substantial height. When she
into her Calm's Point apartment at seven o'clock that eve
explained that she'd just come in from exercise class whe
and hadn't had time to change. Except for your shoes, he
did not say.

Miss. Finch... "Please call me Abby," she said at once...
have been at least forty (her son was, after all, in his
she looked no older than thirty-two or -
three. Proud of her carefully
honed appearance, she walked ahead of him into the living
him a seat, asked if he'd like something to drink, and th
face him on the sofa, her knees touching his briefly befo
repositioned herself, folding her long legs under her, pl
demurely in her lap. There was incense burning somewhere
and Miss. Finch herself Abby was wearing a perfume thick
insinuation. Carella felt as if he'd inadvertently droppe
whorehouse in Singapore. He decided he'd better get to th
and get the hell out of here. That was exactly how threat

"It was good of you to see me, Miss. Finch," he said. "I
to..." "Abby," she said. "Please."

I'll try not to take up too much of your time,, said. "It's my understanding..."

"Are you sure you wouldn't like a drink?"

Leaning toward him, placing one hand lightly on his shoulder, he thought,

"Thank you, no," he said, "I'm still officially on duty."

"Would you mind if I had one?"

"Not at all," he said.

She swiveled off the sofa, moved like a dancer at a bar with a high top stool in front, opened it, looked over her shoulder like Betty Grable in a World War II poster, smiled, and said, softly, "Nothing, thank you," and said.

She poured something dark into a short tumbler, dropped several ice cubes into it, and came back to the sofa.

"To the good life," she said, and smiled mysteriously, as if to say, "I hope you can understand."

"Miss. Finch," he said, "it's our..." "Abby," she said, and raised her eyebrows in a reprimand.

"Abby, yes," he said. "It's our understanding that you were to ask Michael to ask for his assistance in..."

"Yes, in March sometime. Toward the end of March. Because that's when my son was fooling around with witchcraft..."

"Well, not witchcraft, certainly..."

"The same thing, isn't it? Devil worship? Worse, in fact."

And smiled again, mysteriously.

"And you wanted his help, you wanted him to tell "

to your son... "Well, yes, would you want your son involved in this stuff?. I went to see Father Michael because Bornless was a member of St. Catherine's. And I thought if Andrew got a call from

was raised as a Catholic, you know.., it might carry some

"How'd you find out your son was attending services.., if they're called..." "Masses," she said. "I guess. I forget

It was someone I ran into, she said did I know my son was Satanism? A woman who knew both me and Andrew."

"But why did you care?"

"I'm sorry?"

"You and your son are estranged, why'd you care what he w

"My son worshipping the Devil?" she said, looking astonished. "You like to have that going around town? That your faggot involved in Satanism?"

"You mean... well, I'm not sure what you mean.

Were you afraid this would reflect upon you in way?"

"Of course it would. God knows I'm not a Catholic anymore. I can't just forget upbringing entirely, can she?"

And smiled mysteriously again, as if mocking own words.

"So you went to see Father Michael..." said.

"Yes. That was the church I used to attend. Before my fall from grace," she said, and lowered her head like a nun, and again he had the feeling of mocking him, but he could not for the life of imagine why

"I see," he said. "And you told him..." "I told him my son was worshipping the Three, four blocks from his own church! And that I was in touch with Andrew..."

"Which he did."

"Yes."

"Which made your son very angry."

"Well, I really don't care how angry it made I just wanted

going to that damn church."

"And this was toward the end of March? you went to see hi

"Yes, the first time."

"Oh? Were there other times?"

"Well, I..."

Her bloneness suddenly registered on him.

That and her blatant sexuality.

"How often did you see him?" he asked.

"Once or twice."

"Including your initial visit toward the end of March?"

"Yes."

"Then it was only twice."

"Well, yes. Well, maybe three times."

"Which?"

"Three times. I guess."

"Starting sometime toward the end of March."

"Yes."

"When in March?"

"Would you mind telling me...?"

"Do you remember whent"

"Why is this important to you?" "Because he was killed,"
flatly.

Her look, accompanied by an almost indiscernible shrug, s

got to do with me?

"When in March?" he asked again.

"It was a Friday," she said. "I don't remember exactly wh

Carella took out his notebook, and turned to the calendar back of the book. "The last Friday in March was the thirti

it?"

"No. Before then."

"The twenty-third?"

"Possibly."

"And the next time?"

"In April sometime."

"Can you remember the date?"

"I'm sorry, no. Look, I know the man was but..."

"Were you with him on Easter Sunday?" asked.

Sometimes, when you zeroed in that way, figured you were possession of the You had them. They didn't know how, but already knew, and there was no lying.

"As a matter of fact, I was," she said.

Rashomon never ends.

Carella has already heard five tellings, count" five, of Sunday Saga, as it is now to the entire literate world, b

version to come and this one will be Abigail Her Story, a

to tell it full out, no barred, a premise and a promise t

first eight words: "I went there to make love him."

By that time... This is now the fifteenth day of April, b

that, perfect for making love in cozy stone corners of a

that time, they've been doing exactly that here and there

so to speak --

for a two weeks, ever since the first of April, when went to see the priest for the second time. As reports it now, in the rectory on April Fool's Day that she was mischievous spirit of the occasion, to seduce the good father. Attracted first meeting to his Gene Kelly smile and his breezy unmannerly manner, she had begun wondering what he wore under that suit of his, and she was now determined to find out. She was astonished to learn, however... For whereas she knows she's an enormous woman who takes very good care of herself, after all, not only exercise classes, but also bicycling in the park, and milking her skin, she's been told by people who should know that she is one among the city's great beauties, of which there are many, she doesn't wish to sound immodest...

... but she was nonetheless enormously surprised, on that April, by his extreme state of readiness. It was almost as if a designing woman had been preparing him for her working hands, softening the ground, so to speak--

because as it turned out, the good father was an absolute pushover, Little Mr. Roundheels himself, over cassock, a flash of eye, a show of leg, and he was only a minute, fumbling for the buttons of her blouse and confessing upon a time, before he joined the ministry, he'd done it before for the first and last time with a fourteen-year-old girl named Felicia Randall.

Abby admits to Carella now that there was something delicious about doing it with a priest, something that kept her coming back, pardon the expression..." she said

... back to the church again and again, three, four times a week, noon and night... "I lied about only having seen him a few times, something that took her back there on Easter Sunday as well. After all, it is a time celebration, isn't it, Easter? The Resurrection and all that? So why not celebrate? When she is there to do the Good Friday of the S Telling of Rashomon, Easter Sunday, the fifth of April in the Year of Our Lord, Amen.

She is wearing for the occasion of the priest's twelfth despoiling -- she has counted the number times they've done it since April -- a simple woolen suit appropriate to the chill of season, but with a garter belt and silk pants she bought at Victoria's Secret

silk stockings and nothing else, the priest having told her on one occasion that he loved her, watching her naked breasts spill from time unbuttoned her blouse, perhaps recalling his similar experience with the young but bountiful Felicia on the rooftop. But all that he tells Abby is that he wants to end it, that their relationship is tainted with guilt and remorse, that he feels a traitor to his church and his sacred vows, and has even contemplated suicide... "I have told me that," she said.

... so please, Abby, we must end it, this is driving me crazy. I used to call me Abby, it was a pet name..."

please, have mercy on me, let me end it, please, my dearest. He called me his dearest..."

which Abby, his dearest, has no intention of doing. Ending it now. She is enjoying this too much, this sinful expedition into the heart of religiosity, this corruption of a priest, this sin against God, so to speak, in his own house, oh no, she is not about to stop now. Not now when her pleasure is so fulfilling, not now when she is at the peak of her ardor and he is at the peak of his delirium. He tells him... "I told him if he ended it now, I'd let the world know about it."

She smiled at Carella, mysteriously.

"Which is when he started..."

"Which is when he started yelling blackmail," Carella said.

"Oh?" Abby said.

"You were heard and you were seen," Carella said, lying a little bit, in that Alexis hadn't seen her face.

"Well, yes, that's exactly what he started yelling.

Blackmail. This is blackmail, this is blackmail, how dare you be so silly, really! I told him it was for his own good. Because blackmail was incredibly good for him." "What happened then?" Carella asked.

"Everything," Abby said. "A black kid running into the church and there pounding on the doors, and the doors caved in, and the kids came running in after him, mister, I have to tell you

the back door fast as my feet would carry me."

"When did you see him again?"

"Who?"

"Father Michael."

"Never. I figured if he wanted out, fuck him." looked up and smiled.

"Would you have wanted out?" she asked.

He ignored the question.

"Where were you on May twenty-fourth six-thirty and seven-thirty?" he asked.

"I wasn't out killing a priest, that's for sure."

"Okay, now we know where you weren't," said. "Can you tell me where you were?"

"Not without getting personal," she said, smiled that same mysterious smile.

"Miss. Finch..." he said.

"I was right here," she said. "All night long.

a man named Dwight Colby. Check it," she "he's in the photo."

"Thank you," he said. "I will." "He's black," she said.

The ugly one again.

"Qu tal?"

His first words. Signaling that they would speak only in that language. She went along with it. Tomorrow it would be over with.

Forever.

In Spanish, she said, "Yo tengo el dinero."

I have the money.

"Oh?" he said, surprised. "That was very fast."

"I met with my contact last night. The deal is too complicated to explain, but..."

"No. Explain it."

"Not on the telephone. You can understand that."

Let me say only that it turned out to be simpler than I thought it would."

"Well, that's very nice, isn't it?"

Forced joviality in his voice.

Pero, eso est6 muy bien, no?

"Yes," she said. "Can you come here tomorrow afternoon?"

"I'm not sure we want to come there," he said.

"You live in a dangerous place. A person can get hurt in

Reminding her that there was still an additional debt she was cutting of the handsome one.

The two million would pay for the killing of Alberto Hidalgo. But she knew the ugly one would not be content until the debt was paid for as well.

Machismo was invented by Spanish-speaking people. So was venganza.

"Well, I'm sorry," she said, "but I'm not about to go out carrying two million cash."

Show them the green.

"You have the full amount, eh?"

"All of it."

"In what denominations?"

"Hundreds."

"How many hundreds?"

He almost trapped her. She surely would counted that much surely would known how many hundred-dollar bills there were two million dollars. Her mind clicked like calculator. Drop two zeros with... "Twenty thousand," she said at once, and embroidered "Two hundred banded hundred bills in each stack." "Good,"

"Can you be here at three tomorrow?"

Willis would be working the day watch a He'd leave here a past eight, and wouldn't be home till four-fifteen, four-thirty.

that time it would be finished.

"Three-thirty," he said.

"No, that's too..."

"Three-thirty," he repeated.

"All right," she said, sighing. "You'll have minutes to and get out."

"I hope there won't be any tricks this time," said.

The word trucos meant only that in S Tricks. It did not have secondary or tertiary meanings it had in English, where a either a prostitute's client or the service she performed was not making veiled reference to either her own or his occupations. Too much the gentleman for that. No Shad Rusman's mind wasn't in the gutter. He was simply warning her up with any surprises.

"No guns," he said, "no knives, eh?"

Reminder of the debt again.

The cutting of the handsome one.

"No tricks," she said. "I just want this over and done with."

"Yes, so do we."

The something in his voice again. The promise.

Running deep and dark and icy cold beneath the surface of

"I'll see you at three-thirty tomorrow," she said, and hung up.

And realized all at once that she was trembling.

He went back to the church again at noon that the first of the month had called ahead to ask if i could look through the dead again, Father Oriella had told him it would be no bother. He had a meeting at the downtown, and would be out of the office that day. "If you need any assistance," he'd "just ask Marcella."

Marcella Palumbo, as it happened, was out lunch when Carella came. It was Mrs. Henness who let him into the rectory and then into the small office. Where there had been scattered all over the night of the and cartons stacked everywhere when the fire was in, there was now order and a sure sense of control.

"What is it you're looking for?" Mrs. Henness' asked.

"I'm not sure," Carella said.

"Then how will you know where to look?"

Good question.

He was here, he guessed, to do paperwork again.

To some people, Hell was eternal flames, and to others it was caught in midtown traffic, but to Carella it was paperwork. He was punished now for having walked out of church without having

penance all those years ago. A vengeful God was heaping m
on him.

He asked Mrs. Hennessy if she knew where Father Oriella h
calendar, checkbooks, and canceled checks that had been r
by the police. She said she thought Mrs. Palumbo had file
M-

Z file drawer, though she had no idea why the woman had p
since checks and calendars both started with a C, so why
them in the A-

C drawer? Carella had no idea, either. But sure enough,
there they were, at the front of the M-

Z drawer. He thanked Mrs.

Hennessy, declined her offer of a cup of coffee, sat down
and began going through the material yet another time.

As earlier, the priest's appointment calendar told him no
importance. On the day of his murder, he had celebrated m
A.M. and twelve noon, and then had done the Miraculous Me
following the noon mass. He had met with the Altar Societ
two, and the Rosary Society at four. He was scheduled to
Parish Council at eight that night, presumably after dinn
appointment he kept. That was it for the twenty-
fourth day of Carella

skimmed back through the pages for preceding week. Again,
nothing seemed significant.

He put the appointment calendar aside, took St. Catherine
Catholic Church checkbook from the drawer, and began thro
for checks the priest had during the month of May. Here a
checks for photocopying and garage, mortgage maintenance,
insurance, flower.. missalettes, and so on. Carella turne
stubs for May 24.

The first stub on the page was numbered 5699. a hand that
Michael's, and Carella assumed to be Kristin Lund's, the
check had been written to Macauley Tree Care, Inc. for sp
in the amount of \$37.50. As he'd done last Friday the squ
now went down the one after the other, all of them dated
numbered sequentially:

5700

To: US Sprint For: Service thru 5/17

\$176.80

5701

To: Isola Bank and Trust For: June mortgage \$1480.75

5702

To: Alfred Hart Insurance Co.

For: Honda Accord LX, Policy # HR 9872724

\$580.00

5703

To: Orkin Exterminating Co. Inc.

For: May services \$36.50

5704

To: The Wanderers For: Band deposit \$100.00

That was the last check Father Michael had written on the murder.

Carella closed the checkbook.

Nothing.

Paperwork, he thought. That's why he was here.

Punishment. The ransacked G-L file. The eighth circle of Hell would be going through that another time, and trying to discern what it. Because no one zeros in on a single file, that file of searches through that file.] haste, tosses papers recklessly onto the floor, unless that someone is looking for something if the something had in fact be found and taken from the office, then that something may have been the reason for the perhaps if he studied the papers in as they'd been filed, discover a break in continuity, a lapse, a gap, a hole in

then, by studying the surrounding papers, and using his powers of reasoning, he hoped he might be able to figure out what purloined something had been. In short, planned to study the order to define hole.

It occurred to him that Father Oriella might have replaced the G-L file with a G-

L file his own. But no, the fastidious Marcella had refilled the dead priest's papers exactly where they'd been on the murder, there to be consulted whenever or if ever his successor looked something concerning the church. Carella opened the bottom one on the left and took out the first hanging folder and made-

himself comfortable at the desk again, and began going through the folders one by one.

He thought, at one point, that he'd found

meaningful absence in a file labeled GUTTERS.

Last autumn, Father Michael had been in correspondence with Henry Norton, Jr., at a firm called Norton Brothers Seamless Company, regarding the repair and possible replacement of leaders and gutters. He had written a letter on September 10, in appointment with Mr. Norton to visit the site and give an estimate. Then he'd written another letter on October 11, stating that he'd like to see a written estimate in addition to the verbal one. Norton had given him after his visit, and then a further letter on October 16, stating that he was now in receipt of the written estimate and that this would serve as agreement to the terms. It occurred to him that he would be looking forward to word as to when the actual work would commence. The missing document was the written estimate Father Michael said he'd received. It turned out, however, that the estimate had been misfiled. Carella ran across it later, in a folder labeled HOLY NAME SOCIETY.

There it was. On a Norton Brothers Seamless Gutter Company estimate. An estimate of \$1,036 to repair the leaders and gutters at St. Catherine's Church.

Filed between the minutes of the Holy Name Society meeting for January and February of this year.

The last folder in the file was a hefty one labeled LENT.

Carella read every last document in that folder.

There was nothing else in the G-L drawer.

Sighing heavily, he replaced the folder in bottom file drawer, pushed the drawer back into the cabinet. It did not close all the way, it opened again. Eased it shut. It still would not completely close. More of the drawer jutted from the cabinet frame. He opened it again and checked the slide mechanism. The drawer seated firmly on the rollers, nothing seemed to be snagging. So what the hell...?

He tried closing it again. It slid back into the cabinet and stopped. Something at the back of the drawer, or perhaps behind it, was preventing it from sliding all the way into the cabinet. He opened the drawer again, got down on his hands and knees, leaned in over the edge and reached in behind it. Something was stuck there. He couldn't pull it out, but... He yanked back his hand in sudden searing pain.

A thin line of blood ran across his fingertips.

The something back there was a knife.

He had found the murder weapon.

The defense attorney, a man named Oscar Loring, leaned in over Willis and said, "And what was this, exactly, Detective?"

He had a bristly mustache and the breath of a lion who'd just eaten a warthog. It was now a quarter to three. Willis had been in court an hour and a half this morning, and had been on again since 10 o'clock, when court had reconvened. Trying to explain, he requested a no-

knock warrant, and next why he'd shot a man who'd tried to kill him with an AR-15. This had been in October of last year, a raid on a stash pad. The case had just come to trial. He was attempting to show that Willis had lied on his affidavit application for the search warrant, that he'd had no reason to believe there'd be either weapons or contraband material in the apartment, and that in fact he'd planted both the weapons and the contraband after he'd kicked in the door!

He now wanted to know exactly what time it was that Willis O'Brien and four uniformed cops from CPEP had kicked in the door.

apartment.

"It was nine o'clock in the morning," Willis said.

"Exactly nine o'clock?" Loring asked.

"I don't know if it was exactly. We had the raid scheduled for nine o'clock, it's my belief we were assembled by nine and went to the apartment.

"But you don't know if it was exactly..." "Excuse me," the witness said, "but where are you going with this?"

His name was Morris Weinberg, and he had a bald head fringed by white sideburns, and he was fond of telling people that he had shaved his hair the moment he'd been appointed to the bench.

"Your Honor," Loring said, "it's essential to client's case to know at exactly what illegal entry was..."

"Objection!"

The prosecuting attorney. Bright young guy the D.A.'s office. Loring get away with as much as an inch of bullshit.

"Sustained. What difference will it make, Loring, if the entry was at a minute before or a minute after nine? What possible difference?"

"If Your Honor will permit me..."

"No, I'm not sure I will. You've kept this on the stand for an hour and a half hours picking at every detail of a raid he and his partner were under protection of a warrant duly signed by a justice of the peace. You've questioned his integrity, his his methods, and even his legitimacy birth, which I'm sure you'll get around to the jury in a moment."

"Your Honor, there is a jury present..."

"Yes, I'm aware of the jury. I'm also aware of fact that we've spent a great deal of time here, that unless you can tell me why it's so important pinpoint the time of entry, then I will have to stop off this line of questioning." "Your Honor," Loring said, "the witness was awake and eating his breakfast at nine o'clock."

"So?"

"Your Honor, this witness claims they kicked the door at and found my client in bed.

Asleep, Your Honor."

"So?"

"I'm merely suggesting, Your Honor, that if the detective perjure himself on..."

"Objection!"

"Sustained. Now cut that out, Mr. Loring. You know better

"If the detective is mistaken about what actually happened morning of the raid, then perhaps he made a similar mistake cause."

"Are you referring to probable cause for the search warra

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Detective Willis," Weinberg said, "why did you believe t weapons and contraband materials in that apartment?"

"An undercover police officer had made several buys there in advance of the raid. Of a controlled substance, namely, he reported seeing weapons there. Of a type, I might add, at us the moment we entered the apartment."

"What's his name? This undercover officer?"

"Officer Charles Seaver, Your Honor."

"His precinct?"

"Same as mine, Your Honor. The Eight-Seven."

"Does that satisfy you as to probable cause, Mr. Loring?"

"I'm just hearing of this, Your Honor. This not stated on Willis's petition for a..." "I said information based on knowledge and be..."

"You didn't mention a police officer..."

"What difference does it make? The warrant granted, wasn't it? I went into that damn with a..."

"Just a minute now, just a minute," said.

"Sorry, Your Honor," Willis said.

"Can we get Officer Seaver here this afternoon Weinberg asked."

"I'd need time to prepare, Your Honor," Loft said.

"Tomorrow morning, then. Be ready to call him nine A.M."

"Your Honor..."

"This court is adjourned until nine A.M. morning," Weinberg said. He banged his gavel, abruptly stood up.

"All rise!" the Clerk of the Court shouted, everyone in the courtroom stood up as swept out like a bald Batman, trailing his black robe.

The clock on the wall read 2:55 P.M. They were due at three thirty.